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A PASTORAL ADDRESS

BY THE

RIGHT REV. WM. MEADE, D.D.

TO THE

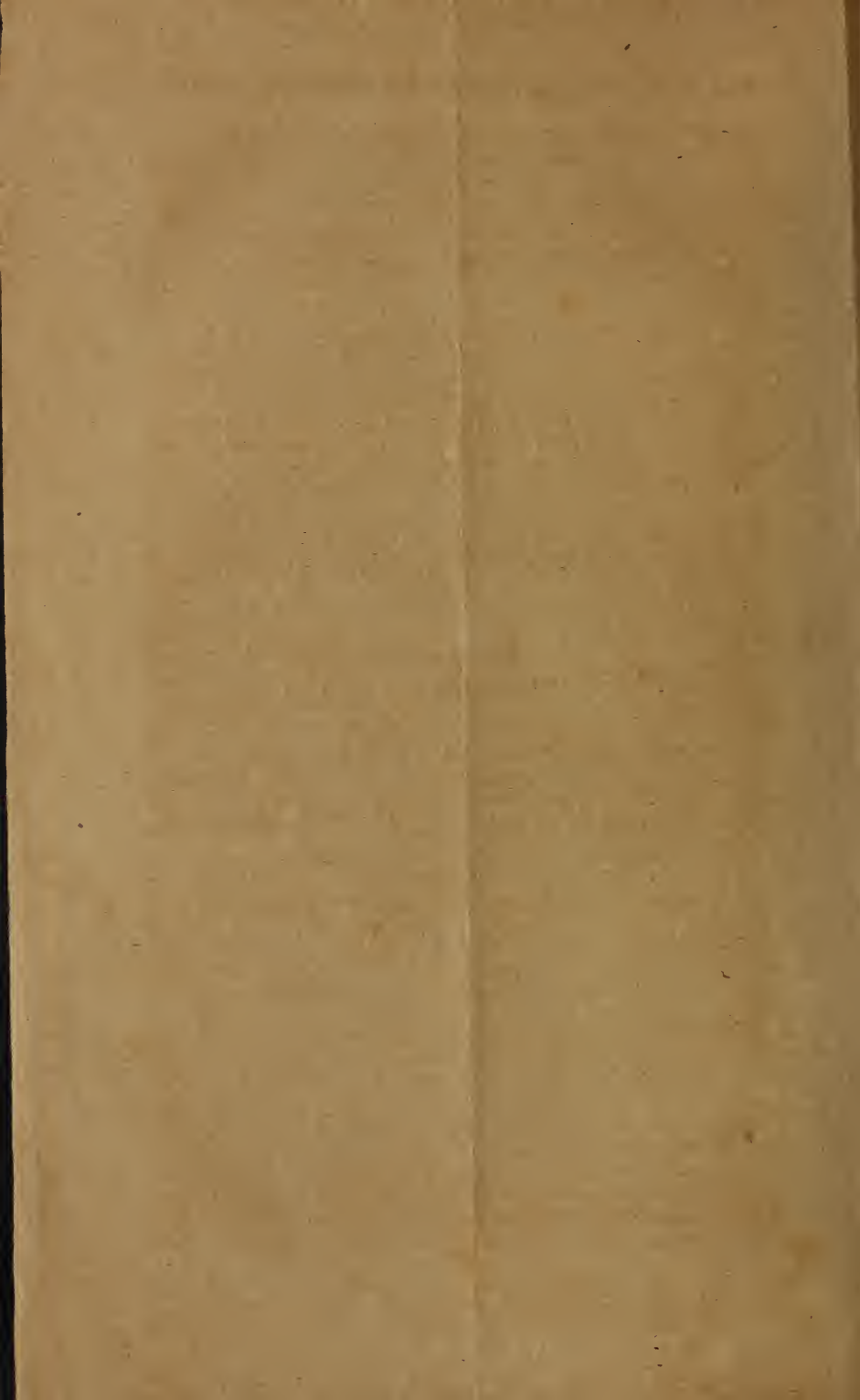
MINISTERS AND MEMBERS

OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN THE

Diocese of Virginia.



The Law of Proportion in the Church of GOD:

Considered in

A PASTORAL ADDRESS

OF

THE RIGHT REV. WILLIAM MEADE, D. D.,

BISHOP OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

In the Diocese of Virginia,

TO THE MINISTERS AND MEMBERS THEREOF,

IN COMPLIANCE

WITH THE 27th CANON OF THE GENERAL CONVENTION.



ALEXANDRIA:

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"We see the whole world and each part thereof, so compacted, that as long as each thing performeth only that work which is natural unto it, it thereby preserveth both other things and itself also."

HOOKE.

"Measure is that which perfecteth all things, because every thing is for some end, neither can anything be available to any end, which is not proportionable thereto, and to proportion, as well excesses, as defects are opposite."

HOOKE.

"We may not so in any one special kind admire her, (wisdom) that we disgrace her in any other, but let all her ways be according to their place and degree adored."

HOOKE.

"If we love our own and the Church's peace, there be two things I conceive we should most carefully avoid: the bestowing too great zeal upon small things, and too much confidence of opinion upon doubtful things."

ARCHBISHOP LEIGHTON.

"But this is the malice of Satan, that when he cannot overthrow the greatest matters, he will raise great troubles in trifles."

BISHOP PILKINGTON.

ERRATA.

Page 9, 10th line from the bottom, read *line*, instead of like, and *cuts*, instead of cut.

Page 15, 14th line, after perhaps, read *one*.

Page 19, 19th line, period after word, instead of semicolon after baptism; 2d line from bottom, comma after so.

Page 32, 14th line, read *valiant*, instead of violent; 23d line from bottom, read *clearly*, instead of faintly.

Page 38, 22d line, read *pervert*, instead of prevent.

Page 39, 9th line, read *as to*, instead of and.

Name	Age
John Smith	25
Mary Jones	30
James Brown	28
Elizabeth White	22
Robert Black	35
Sarah Green	20

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JCH 24Aug28

*Pastoral Address of the Right Rev. WILLIAM MEADE, Bishop of the
Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia, to the
Ministers and Members thereof.*

DEAR BRETHREN IN CHRIST :

By the 27th Canon of our General Convention, it is declared to be "proper that every Bishop of this Church shall deliver at least once in three years, a charge to the Clergy of his Diocese, unless prevented by reasonable cause; and that from time to time, he shall address to the people of his Diocese pastoral letters on some points of Christian doctrine, worship, or manners."

In compliance with this expressed wish of the Church, I have endeavored, not without looking up to God for guidance and help, to prepare something which might answer at one and the same time for both the objects contemplated in the Canon. To ministers and people there is but one religion. Divine truth is the same to us all, and all are equally, because infinitely concerned in it. In one respect we of the ministry differ from the other brethren, in that we have to seek this truth not only for our own salvation, but that we may teach others the right way; which ought to make us very anxious to find it out, lest we be blind leaders of the blind. It should however be a great comfort to all of us to know, that if we diligently seek for truth in the sincere love of it, asking the assistance of Heaven, "having no other plot in our religion (as an old writer expresses it) than to serve God, and save our souls," we shall not be disappointed. We may not be able to find out God unto perfection in all things, since he is a God who in some things hideth himself from man, it being a part of his glory to conceal a matter from the too prying curiosity of men or angels; and there will be, after all our searching, some things in the scriptures hard to be understood and liable to be perverted; still if we are not desirous to be "over-wise" we may without doubt find that highway to Heaven which is so plain that wayfaring men, though fools, need not err therein. The great truths essential to our holiness here, and happiness hereafter, are written in the word of God as with a sunbeam, so that he who runs may read. It was one of the proofs of the divine mission of our Lord, that the gospel he taught was equally for the poor as for the rich, which was not the case with many other religions; and the poor not only gladly received it, but understood it, as set before them in the simple language of himself and disciples. So it has been in every age by those who have had access to his word, and to whom that word has been preached in its simplicity. As to the great soul-saving doctrines and duties of religion, there is not merely the strong concurring testimony of the first ages, but we may say of every age, and of none more than of our own, among the great body

of those who call themselves Christians. The creeds of the first ages, have been the creeds of all ages. Heresies there have been numerous indeed, and dreadful corruptions in practice, according to prophecy, and yet the gates of Hell have not been permitted to prevail. Though Anti-Christ be seen sitting in the very temple of God, and as God—yet the true God of the temple has not deserted it, but continues from time to time, now, as of old, to drive out those who pollute it; and the zeal of the Lord of hosts will one day purge it entirely.

As in the worst times of Israel there were some who kept the truth of God in their hearts, and bowed not the knee to Baal, so has God ever, in answer to the prayer of the Son for his Church, been sanctifying it with his truth, even with that word which is truth, and which maketh the ignorant wise unto salvation. But it is often asked, if the word of God is so plain and so effectual—if “pure religion and undefiled” is so clearly set forth in the scriptures—if all who desire it may know “what it is the Lord requireth of them” in order to salvation; why are there so many different opinions and ways among Christians, even among those who should keep knowledge, when men seek the law at their mouth. For such differences, which are generally magnified beyond the actual reality, various reasons may be found in the weakness and corruption of our nature, the prejudices of birth and education, the want of a sincere desire for truth, the influence of selfishness and party spirit. But even when sincere and pious persons seek to find out the whole truth, and have actually embraced what is most important, yet do they differ not a little in their estimate of the relative value of different parts of the great scheme; and some, by forming a wrong judgment, disturb the proportion of the whole, thereby throwing into confusion what God appointed to be all order and harmony, and greatly weakening the effect of what he designed to be mighty power. God is emphatically the God of order in all his works, and any change in the due proportion established must be productive of evil, and might lead to the crush of worlds. Some of the laws of matter are known to us, well enough at least to satisfy us of this truth; and as there is a wonderful analogy between the laws and operations of the natural and moral worlds, it is the part of wisdom to learn a lesson therefrom.

“Nature is Christian, preaches to mankind,
And bids dead matter aid us in our creed.”

“We see the whole world, (says Hooker, our great Ecclesiastical politician) and each part thereof, so compacted, that as long as each thing performeth only that work which is natural unto it, it thereby preserveth both other things and itself also. Contrarywise let any principal thing, as the sun, the moon, any one of the heavens or elements, but once cease, or fail or swerve, and who doth not easily conceive, that the sequel thereof would be ruin both to itself and whatsoever dependeth on it.” And again, reasoning “from nature up to nature’s God,” he says, “Measure is that which perfecteth all things, because every thing is for some end; neither can any thing

be available to any end, which is not proportionable thereto ; and to proportion, as well excesses, as defects, are opposite. Again, for as much as nothing doth perish, but only through excess or defect of that, the due-proportioned measure whereof doth give perfection, it followeth, that measure is likewise the preservative of all things." In consistency with this, when speaking of the various ways in which wisdom teacheth, he says " We may not so in any one special kind admire her, that we disgrace her in any other ; but let all her ways be according to their place and degree adored."

The truth and importance of the principle of which we are speaking, may be illustrated and enforced by a reference to the human body, so fearfully and wonderfully made by the hand of a divine architect, and to which the Church of God in its proportion of faith, its order, its gifts and graces, is likened. All its members, though necessary to its perfection, are not so to its existence, and therefore are not all equally honorable. No one, however, may boast itself against another, saying I have no need of thee ; but all must perform the office assigned, and all receive the honor and cultivation which are due. The head, as the seat of the understanding, and the heart, as the seat of life, must be most carefully guarded. A blow on the one may annihilate reason, an arrow or ball piercing the other, or its action by any cause for a moment stopped, death spreads through all the members ; while, as to the others, though they may by neglect or violence be maimed and much injured, the man may still survive, and perform the chief duties of life. Necessity indeed seems to require in carrying on the occupations of life, that some of the members of the body should be more cultivated than others, which is manifested by their greater prominence, strength, and agility : but in order to the greatest perfection of the whole man all should receive their due proportion of exercise and culture.

The same is true of the inward, spiritual, and more important part of man. All the faculties and affections thereof deserve culture according to the measure of their importance, and if one of them receive undue attention, the other must suffer proportional loss. So it is also as to the relative importance of the two parts of our system, the corporeal and the spiritual. The body may be so pampered and increased by undue attention, indulgence, and high living, that the mind enclosed in its fatness may be smothered, and become inert and useless. On the contrary the mind may be, and has been, the object of such exclusive attention that the body becomes weakened and diseased, till at length by the law of reaction, the mind itself suffers, and that perfection of our nature, the "*mens sana in corpore sano*," a sound mind in a sound body, is forfeited. The same may be said of some of the avocations of life, where the neglect of this rule is attended with the loss of those benefits which belong to its observance. In agriculture there are those who bestow undue attention upon lesser matters, as the mere ornament of grounds and gardens, to the neglect of the fields which yield the solid nutriment to man and beast, until all must be parted with ; while others

neglecting the enclosures which protect the growing crops, or the barns which are needed to preserve them, lose much of the benefits of their hard labor. So also in the profession of law, there are men of strong minds who, disdaining trifles, seize upon the strong points of the case, pressing them to the utmost, rightly judging that it is by the weight, not the number, of the arguments that a cause should be decided; while others of smaller minds weary out both judge and jury with a tedious enumeration of trivial considerations, relying on the number rather than the force thereof.

And yet men of strong minds should not forget that these inferior points belong to the case, and that many a cause has been lost by too great neglect of them. If in all the affairs of man this rule of proportion should be observed—if there be truth in the saying of an ancient philosopher, that “every thing, both great and small, should fulfil the task which destiny hath set down,” how peculiarly applicable to man is it, as to the most important of all things with which he has to do—that is, religion—which consists in things to be believed, and things to be done—all of them however differing more or less in character and importance, and requiring a corresponding proportion of time, thought, and zeal to be bestowed upon them. There are diversities of gifts though but one Spirit;—divers orders though but one ministry; and Christ himself most plainly declares that there are some things more, and some less important, the former of which ought to be done, the latter not left undone—that is, the former done first, chiefly, with the greatest zeal; the latter not left undone, except when interfering with the former, or prevented by some sufficient necessity.

The Spirit, speaking of the whole Church of God, compares it at one time to the human body, composed of various members, having each its proper office and differing in honor; and at another, to a house whose foundation or chief cornerstone is Christ, and all Christians are different parts fitly joined together as living stones, making one great temple.

As to the former comparison, it has been well remarked (by Hooker) that the “Church being a mystical body must be proportionable in all its parts, or it cannot stand;” and as to the latter, a house, whether we regard its beauty, utility or strength, must be built according to rule, and especially have a foundation stronger and broader than its top.

“The inverted Pyramid can never stand.”—

The apostle Paul, in speaking of the Church as the mystical body of Christ—that is the blessed company of believers—exhorts each member of the same “not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath given to every man the measure of faith.” Now what is true of those who are ministers and members of the Church, is also true of their gifts and graces—and of the duties, doctrines, ordinances, and ceremonies of religion. Prophesying, that is, preaching, or expounding

scripture, was preferred by the apostle to all other gifts, even though miraculous; and yet he has a more excellent way than that to show us—namely, charity, which is greater than faith and hope, great as they were.

A neglect of proper regard to this distinction, so manifest in God's word, has we believe been productive of much evil to the cause of religion, just as the undue devotedness of our hearts to certain earthly objects is destructive of our comfort. The man whose mind and heart are under the direction of wisdom is one, who,

“Loving in proportion, loves in peace.”

But it may be asked, can any thing coming from God in the way of revelation and command be in any sense small? Is not he accursed who continueth not in all things—are we not warned against despising what we call little things—does not our Lord himself declare that he who shall break one of the least of his commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be counted least in the kingdom of Heaven—that is, unworthy of it? Does not the infiniteness of God, and the inconceivable importance of every thing bearing upon our eternal interests, stamp an infinite value on the very least of his directions, so that even an idle word shall be brought into judgement? Does not the very easiness of a command make disobedience the more criminal? And is it for us to value and graduate the appointments of God, saying which may, and which may not be neglected with impunity? To all this it is replied, that though God is an infinite being, and his laws of infinite value, because all tending to an infinite good, yet are they given to a finite being, who has only a limited portion of time, thought, affection, and labor to bestow upon them, and he must see and divide himself rightly amongst them all according to their relative importance, ascertaining this as well as he can from the word of God, by the help of sound judgment and observation on the effects thereof. Should he err and bestow too much on one, he takes so much from others, thereby wronging his own soul and injuring the cause of religion. The ministers of religion especially ought to attend to this, as it is required of them rightly to divide the word of God, and after our Lord's example to say which are the greatest commandments—which are the weightier matters of the law, not to be dispensed with under the penalty of eternal ruin; and at the same time to show how none must be neglected, or have undue partiality displayed towards them. In all ages there have been those who have fixed upon some favorite doctrine, precept, or external rite of religion, and magnified it into undue importance to the neglect of all others; and this has been one fruitful source of heresies and schisms in the Church of God. It is also notorious that men are more prone to lay the emphasis on small things, rather than great; on things external, rather than internal; and on things dark and doubtful, rather than those clear and undisputed. There is an admirable passage in the writings of that eminent servant of God, Archbishop Leighton, which it could be wished were engraven on every heart.

It was written at a time when disputes ran high between parties within our own Church, and also with those who had separated from it.

"Doubtless (he says) the things wherein we agree are incomparably greater than those wherein we disagree; and therefore should be more powerful to unite us, than the other to divide us. But to restrain myself and stop here, if we love our own and the Church's peace, there be two things, I conceive, we should most carefully avoid — *the bestowing too great zeal upon small things, and too much confidence of opinion upon doubtful things.*"

Bishop Pilkington also, one of the good reformers, in protesting against compulsion as to some of the vestments, says most truly, "But this is the malice of Satan, that when he cannot overthrow the greatest matters, he will raise great troubles in trifles. Peter and Paul agreed in the chiefest articles of our salvation; and yet they differed so about meats, that Paul withstood and rebuked him openly. Paul and Barnabas fell at much bitter contention whether Mark should go with them or not, so that they parted companies and went either of them sundry ways. God defend us from the like." (See letter to the Earl of Leicester.)

The want of a proper regulation of the mind to teach us the right use of this law of proportion, is happily set forth by the excellent Hooker in showing how our fancies or affections mislead us in judging of scripture. "Pythagoras (he says) by bringing up his scholars in the speculative knowledge of numbers, made their conceits therein so strong, that when they came to the contemplation of things natural, they imagined that in every particular thing, they even beheld, as it were with their eyes, how the elements of number gave essence and being to the works of nature. A thing in reason impossible, which notwithstanding through their misfashioned preconceit appeared to them no less certain than if nature had written it in the foreheads of all the creatures of God." He then shows how those who were endeavoring to destroy the Church in order to build up their own on its ruins, imagined that in every scripture they could see the exact pattern of their own discipline, even in smallest matters. Contending against finding any such exact pattern in many things clearly set down in scripture, he justly says, "Most sure it is that when men's affections do form their opinions, they are in defence of error more earnest a great deal, than, for the most part, sound believers in the maintenance of the truth, apprehended according to the nature of that evidence which scripture yieldeth: which being in some things, plain, as in the principles of Christian doctrine; in some things as in these matters of discipline, more dark and doubtful, formeth correspondently that inward assent which God's most gracious spirit, worketh by it as by his effectual instrument." (See preface to his Ecclesiastical Polity.)

It is also a fact which deserves to be mentioned, that the young are most generally apt to be positive and violent on such subjects. As their outward vision is far more distinct than that of the aged,

seeing things distant, as if near at hand, so do they rely on their mental vision, and cannot agree to see some things as through a glass darkly, but all things face to face—sometimes speaking slightly indeed, even of older persons who are more doubtful. This certainty of belief sometimes leads to greater violence of word and action, which has injured the good cause of religion. It has been well said that “when men become so old as to confer with grey hairs, they usually begin to abate something of their violence.”

Bishop Burnet, in his preface to the Exposition of the thirty-nine articles, has an excellent remark on this subject, worthy the consideration of all ministers of religion, indeed of all men, but of them especially. “When a man is inclined by strong arguments to an opinion against which he sees difficulties which he cannot resolve, he ought either to suspend his assent; or if he sees a superiority of argument on one side, he may be determined by that, though he cannot satisfy even himself in the objections that are against it. In that case he ought to reflect upon the weakness and defects of his faculties, which cannot rise up to full and comprehensive ideas of things, especially in that which relates to the attributes of God and to his counsels or acts.” And if any feel still unwilling to confess themselves thus unable to master the difficult and doubtful things of religion, we might again quote the testimony of one, not dull of mind to perceive the truth, nor fearful of heart to declare it. Mr. Hooker says, “When God himself doth speak those things which, either for height or sublimity of matter, or else for secresie of performance, we are not able to reach unto, *as we may be ignorant without danger, so it is no disgrace to confess that we are ignorant.*”

But we may rise still higher in our authorities for humility in regard to things difficult and doubtful which occur in God's word, and the application thereof. One of the sacred writers (St. Peter) acknowledges in relation to another (St. Paul) that there are some things hard to be understood—actually hard—he doubtless meant even at that day—which the unlearned and unstable, who will pry into them, and whose hearts are not fully set upon the truth, wrest to their own destruction. The more sober-minded do not insist upon understanding these hard things, being satisfied with the plain things which make us wise unto salvation. The stable, also, who are established in great principles, cannot be moved by a few difficult questions; such, for instance, as those about the divine decrees, and things indispensable to Church membership, and the like, which cut off the schismatic and the heretic. It ought to be observed also on this subject, that those are most positive and intolerant, who most implicitly take their faith from others, instead of drawing it by careful study and humble prayer from the word of God. The Romanists, who blindly take every thing from the infallible oracle of their Church, think it impossible they can be wrong, and are therefore disposed most violently to condemn others; and those who approach nearest in sentiment to the Church of Rome in this blind reliance on others, are more like it also in their judgments on those who differ from them.

Before dismissing this more general train of remark, I would caution against one error, into which we are liable to fall in the application of this law of proportion. There are some good persons, and some indolent ones, and some ignorant ones, who adopt a very compendious, and easy, and, as they suppose, charitable method of settling all differences, and determining what is truth and duty. If it be a personal matter, they say both must be equally wrong, without investigating the merits of the case. If it be a matter of doctrine, or opinion, or religious observance, that is under discussion, they suppose that truth must lie very nearly, if not exactly, midway, and therefore as by a rule in numbers they decide it. Now this may be good arithmetic, but not sound theology, or morality. Truth is not always that which lies half way between two opposing parties or opinions. That is truth which God's word teaches—that is duty which it commands, and it is our part humbly and diligently to search it out. Some think that to stand between two parties and condemn both, is the only real independence and true charity. But there may be as little independence, and as much uncharitableness in this, as in being of the one, or the other. So are we constituted, that on the great questions of morals, religion, and politics, which agitate and divide mankind, almost all men who think, or read, will feel themselves more inclined to one or the other; and when this is the case, there can be no harm, but rather honesty, in the candid avowal of it. The wrong is, in indulging an uncharitable spirit, in shutting our eyes upon what is good and true on either side, and in not refusing to advocate and do what we believe to be evil. Let all seek peace by promoting truth in a proper manner, and moderating those with whom they agree and act when they think them disposed to excess, and thus will the greatest amount of unity that can be hoped for on earth, be secured.

Application of the foregoing principle.

Let me now, in order to give effect to these general remarks, attempt an application of them to some of those religious principles and observances, wherein it is most important that the rule of proportion should be held sacred.

A P P L I C A T I O N .

1st. To things external and internal.

The first great division of things pertaining to religion, is that which separates them into internal and external acts.

The soul and body of man though making but one person, are yet distinct and separable. The soul may think and feel in some measure, even now, with but little help from the body, as when the eyes and ears are closed. The soul can indeed live apart from the body, as between death and the resurrection; but the body cannot live without the soul. Nevertheless God has made the soul very dependant upon the body, whose members all minister something to it.

So in religion there is a soul and a body, the latter generally necessary to the former. There are certain acts of the mind indispensable, and to which certain outward things are appointed to minister, but which are not in all cases indispensable.

Take, for instance, the public worship of God, and the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper; great as is the duty of observing these, and the blessing of rightly observing them, they cannot be ranked with faith, and penitence, and the effect of the word enforced on the heart by the Spirit, because these are indispensable—wherefore we find this difference in what is said of them by the inspired writers, that whereas salvation is often ascribed to faith and repentance alone, without the mention of the others, and the renewing of the mind, or new birth, to the word and Spirit alone, these things are not promised to those outward ordinances alone, but only in connexion with the others, and in such a manner as to show they would profit nothing if alone. If baptism, for instance, saves, it is in connexion with the renewing of the Holy Spirit, and the answer of a good conscience. Accordingly we find that an instance occurred at the very time of our Lord's crucifixion, when no public ordinance could be observed, and yet the dying thief was pardoned and saved. And he was only one of many who followed after, dying on the scaffold or at the stake—the martyrs—of whose salvation no one doubts, although their only baptism was in blood, and their only supper the devouring flames. The same may be said of all other outward things.

As to the superiority of the one over the other of these two classes, our Lord has left us no room for doubt or hesitation. On a certain occasion one came to him, “tempting him, and saying, which is the great commandment in the law?” Instead of rebuking him for making any difference between the laws of God, our Lord at once replies “thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” It is a most mortifying proof of that tendency to magnify little things even above great ones, that, amongst the many disputes dividing the Jews as to the degrees of the different laws which led to this question, some of the Rabbis contended that the law concerning phylacteries was the greatest—others, that concerning sacrifices—and others, that relating to circumcision. Too much indeed was their zeal like that of many in every age among Christians concerning externals; and if our Lord had revisited the earth at any period since his ascension, he would have found but too much reason for the censure which he inflicted on some in his day. The great point however is settled, that to love the Lord with all that is within us, and out of this same feeling to love our neighbor as ourselves, is better than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. Bishop Butler, in his admirable work on the analogy of religion to nature, in speaking of the proneness of man to substitute positive observances

for inward piety to God and benevolence to man, as set forth in the first great command, and that which is like unto it, says, "That upon the occasion of mentioning together positive and moral duties, the scripture always puts the stress of religion upon the latter, and never upon the former; which, though no sort of allowance to neglect the former when they do not interfere with the latter, yet is a plain intimation, that when they do, the latter is to be preferred." He then refers to different passages of scripture, especially that of Hosea, as quoted by our Lord, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," and adds "It can hardly be doubted that the thing our Lord intended in that declaration was, that the Pharisees had not learnt from it, as they might, wherein the general spirit of religion consists; that it consists in moral piety and virtue, as distinguished from forms and ritual observances." In a charge also to the clergy, he says, "Indeed in most ages of the Church the care of reasonable men has been, as there has been for the most part occasion, to draw the people off from laying too great weight upon external things, upon formal acts of piety." While, however, he affirms this general propensity of mankind to one error, he had but too much cause in his day, it being a time of infidelity and general neglect of religion, to mourn over the contrary; wherefore, he says, "But the state of matters is changed now with us. These things are neglected to a degree which is, and cannot but be, attended with a decay of all that is good. It is highly reasonable therefore to instruct the people now in the importance of external religion." He then proceeds to exhort to more frequent attendance upon public worship—the use of family prayer, and private devotions.

I will only further remark on this point, that it becomes us ever to remember, that this God, whom to love supremely, is the first and greatest of all the commandments, is not merely the God of the Jews, and the Jehovah of the world, but is our Emmanuel, Christ our Lord, out of whom God is to us a consuming fire. Unless we believe in him, we die in our sins—except we love him, we are accursed forever. To know how to set this truth before the hearts of sinners, is the highest attainment of the preacher; to do it, his first duty: to receive him thus set forth, is the salvation of the soul. All other things are as nothing in comparison with this; all other things are only good so far as they conduce to this end. And there are many things which, in their right place and due proportion, do most happily conduce to this end; some of which I will proceed to consider.

The rule applied to preaching the word, and to public worship.

Let us now consider this rule as applied to two great means of grace, which are sometimes most improperly set in opposition to each other, whereas there should be no strife between them, both being as members of one body, neither of which should boast itself against the other—I mean the preaching of the word, and the prayers, and other services of the Church.

The word of God in the hands of the Spirit, is the mighty instrument for the conversion of souls. By the foolishness of preaching it, (as some have always regarded it) God is pleased to save them that believe. Our Lord and his apostles made most abundant use of it, as have ever since the most faithful and successful of God's ministers. By its fruits it has been proved to be the power of God to the salvation of souls. Just in proportion as preaching was disused, or ceased to be a faithful exhibition of God's word, being turned into the telling of fables, true religion declined. At the time of the Reformation, when the Bible was locked up, and the pulpits ceased to proclaim the Gospel, nothing was more dreaded than the preaching of the Reformers. And faithfully did they wield this mighty weapon against the corrupters of our holy religion.

Of Bishop Jewell it is said by his American Biographer and Annotator, "To preach the word of God himself, and to see that it was preached by others in sincerity and power, he deemed the great business of his life, and acted up to that persuasion."

Hooker also, one of his greatest favorites, and of a kindred spirit, in his argument with those who in his day were for exalting it above measure, nevertheless says, "So worthy a part of divine service we should greatly wrong, if we did not esteem preaching as the blessed ordinance of God; sermons, as keys to the kingdom of Heaven, as wings to the soul, as spurs to the good affections of man; unto the sound and healthy as food; as physic unto diseased minds. Wherefore, how highly soever it may please them with words of truth to extol sermons, they shall not therein offend us." Archbishop Laud also, who was supposed to err in undervaluing sermons by comparison with other services, declared, "I ever took sermons, and do still, to be most necessary expositions and applications of holy Scripture, and a great ordinary means of salvation." But here we must not run into the error of those who confine preaching the word, in its true acceptance, to the pulpit and sermons, excluding from it the reading of scripture from the desk in the service. We should remember that the word now read was the same which Christ, the Prophets, and the Apostles preached, and which was afterwards committed to writing. In reading therefrom to the people, we preach the word, while in sermons we give, according to our knowledge, the sense thereof, and exhort to its reception. Only in proportion as we deliver the true sense thereof, do we actually *preach the word*. It was thus that the priest under the old dispensation read the scriptures in the synagogue every Sabbath day and gave the sense thereof; and thus in the first ages of the Christian Church, where various portions of the Old and New Testament were read, as at this day, the bishops and other ministers present would successively explain certain parts, and exhort to the performance thereof. This appears to have been the most common and favorite method; and it may well be questioned, whether we have improved upon the plan by the use of more regular and formal sermons from single texts; whether the exposition of large and more various portions of

scripture would not be better calculated to acquaint ourselves and people with the true use and meaning of God's word, unbroken and in its proper connexion. The other plan presents a better opportunity for the exercise of ingenuity and talent, and thereby tempts to the display of eloquence and the indulgence of vanity, against which ministers cannot be too carefully guarded. Nevertheless, no matter how the Gospel is delivered, if in its truth, it will be greatly blessed. Whether therefore in the pulpit or in the desk, preaching in sermons or in the lessons, we should feel that it is the word of truth only that can take effect. In reading the lessons we should feel that we are preaching them to the people, and looking upon them, as from the pulpit, give weight and emphasis to the words, as they may require, and not seem to be reading to ourselves and the desk; endeavoring thus, and by other means, to draw attention to the pure word of God. *a*

The rule applied to public prayers.

But while highly esteeming the ministration of God's word, on account of its long tried virtue, let us not encroach on what is due to another appointment of God—his public worship. Himself while on earth, and his chosen disciples, set an example of faithful attendance on the worship of the temple and synagogue, although the peculiar services thereof were soon to be done away, and superseded by something more perfect. No complete system having been given for public worship under either dispensation, to be binding on our observance, but only some brief prayers, after which, according to the wisdom given, Christians were to model and enlarge their devo-

a In the primitive church there were persons appointed to call upon the people from time to time to attend to the scriptures as they were about to be read, and also to engage earnestly in the prayers, sometimes saying to them, "Let us now pray more devoutly," when coming to some particular part of worship. No provision being now made for thus awakening or recalling attention, the ministers must by other means, in private conversation, by tracts, and in the course of sermons, press this duty on the people. The emphatic reading of the lessons, and prayers, coming from the very heart, which after all is the best teacher of sacred rhetoric, whether in the desk or pulpit, would greatly conduce to this. The effect of emphatic reading was remarkably exemplified in Bishop Ravenscroft, in so much that when he was requested to read the service, it was very customary to ask him to "preach it for us."

We should beware of another over-valuation of the public preaching of God's word from the pulpit—that which excludes its efficacy when read in private by individuals, and in families by the rulers thereof, and especially as instilled by little and little into the minds of the young, in all which, it is still, by God's grace, the instrument of conversion and sanctification. "Were the duties of a religious education faithfully performed," said the pious Baxter, "I verily believe preaching would cease to be God's ordinary method of converting souls."

tions, it became their duty to prepare such with the greatest care and piety, seeing they were to be the medium of intercourse with Heaven, so far as language and right sentiments could minister to it. We ought to feel ourselves most happy in having one which surely may without extravagance be regarded after its kind as the most perfect effort of man. Much of it indeed is borrowed from the word of God, some from our Lord's own lips, some probably from the prayers of the devout Jews, and still more from the early liturgies of the Church. It should be no objection to us, that much of it has come down through ages of darkness and corruption—nor that some of it may still be found in the books of the church of Rome; rather let us rejoice that it is there, a means of comfort and grace, to the pious, for such there doubtless are, a condemnation to the evil, and perhaps instrument of purification when God shall come to cleanse this polluted portion of his Church.

Let us, without idolatry, regarding the Liturgy only as a human writing (for such is it called by its framers *b*) but surely as one, which from its age, the sources whence it came, and its frequent revision, we may regard as highly perfected, feel it to be a privilege to worship God according to its venerable forms, and see that both ministers and people use it as they ought. Without instituting any comparison between prayers and sermons, we should approach them as necessary parts of the same service, assured that rightly used they will act and react most favorably on each other. The more devoutly we join in the prayers, and more attentively listen to the lessons of the service, the better we shall be prepared to delight in, and be benefited by, the sermon. Whereas to neglect the former, to wish it were over, that the sermon may come, is to provoke God to withhold his blessing from both, and to send leanness into the soul. If therefore any persons find themselves thinking or speaking only of one, to the disparagement of the other, they violate the true rule of proportion, and only do evil to the cause they advocate. If any persons should unnecessarily delay their coming into God's house, so as to lose part of the word and prayers, they should feel that they have offended God, and sinned against his worship, as much by such omission, as they would insult the preacher and despise God's ordinance of preaching, by leaving the house just as the sermon begins, or before it is entirely over. So as to the minister, should he find himself, in looking forward to public service, thinking only, or unduly, of the effect of the sermon, and not praying that his people may worship God

b In the preface to the book of Common Prayer, there is claimed for it "only such just and favorable construction as in common equity is due to all human writings." How carefully did they avoid the error of the Jews, who placed their Talmud on the same ground with the scriptures; and how different from some of the German Theologians, who have claimed for their symbolical books, (those answering to our Liturgy, Articles, and Homilies) the respect which is due to scripture itself!

in spirit and truth, and the divine blessing rest upon the lessons and prayers; if when in the sacred place he find himself hurrying through the service, or repeating it in a low, and languid voice, as though to save himself and all his energies for the pulpit; let him thereby surely know that he is overvaluing the one, and undervaluing the other. Let both ministers and people then beware of this error, and, as one help to the right use and enjoyment of the service, let them study its excellences, that they may enter readily into the full meaning of its words. Were they much less admirably chosen and arranged than they are, still as the appointed medium of prayer, as words to which solemn thoughts and acts belong, they ought to be well studied, that we may enter fully and heartily into their design. I would not have you to suppose, by these remarks, that I encourage the making invidious comparisons between our own mode of worship and that of others, especially so far as to question the practicability of sincere prayer without such written forms. Zeal may be chiefly expended in such comparisons, and, while the Liturgy is greatly praised, God may not be worshipped in spirit and truth. It is possible to be like the boasting Pharisee, and go away unblessed, while some other without the same advantages of prayer, may yet cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and carry away the blessing. However well we may agree in the superiority of a form, and the excellency of our own, if some one, desirous to form an estimate of churches in this respect, should come into one of ours, when the minister was all hurry, or else lifeless formality, and the response of the people a confused low murmur, or a dumb show, and should then visit some other, where, though the service were far less perfect, yet the minister was solemn and impressive in his manner, and the people, though silent, yet apparently devout, it is needless to say what the result would be. How often, alas, has our Church been thus wounded in the house of her friends! But when, on the other hand, justice, by both minister and people, is done to the service, how deep the impression upon the unprejudiced listener, how happy the effect on the pious worshipper! *c*

c Nothing can be more contrary to the animated spirit and language of our Liturgy, or the design of those who framed it, than a lifeless manner in the minister, and a cold or inaudible response on the part of the people. In primitive times, we read of some large congregations whose loud and united Amen, was as the voice of thunder. In the Romish Church, however, even the reading of the minister became that of a low muttering in an unknown tongue. The constitution of Justinian, in the year 527, says, "we command that all Bishops and Priests do celebrate the holy oblation, and the prayers in Holy Baptism, not speaking low, but with a clear or loud voice, that they may be heard of the people, that thereby the minds of the hearers may be stirred up with great devotion in uttering the prayers of the Lord God." Various are the directions of the Church of England to the same effect, enjoining it on the ministers to read "leisurely, plainly, and distinctly." As to the responses, Mr. Baxter

Application of the Rule to the Sacraments.

Let us now inquire what is the true position and use of the Sacraments in the appointments of God for his Church. To ascribe either too much, or too little to them; to look for more, or seek for less than they have to give, must be more or less injurious, according to the degree of our error. It is true that some may for a time attach undue importance to certain things, and may connect

well remarks, "that it was decay of zeal in the people that first shut out responses. The use of the tongue keepeth awake the mind, and stirreth up God's graces in the heart." As to the dull, inanimate mode of using the service, whether by minister, or people, or by both, it would be well to remember what was once said of it in derision by its enemies. They called it "*The Lethargy of the Church.*" Let us all see that it be not deserved.

The Episcopal Church, however, while rejoicing in her excellent Liturgy, and requiring its exclusive use in her public worship, has never undertaken to interfere with the liberty of her ministers and members on other occasions. Indeed, in the Church of England, there was formerly in general use, now only occasional, it is believed according to one of the canons, a prayer before sermons, partaking of the character of both form, and extempore petition.

The 55th canon directs that before all sermons, lectures and homilies, preachers and ministers shall move the people to join with them in this form, or to this effect, as briefly as they conveniently may, (in hunc aut similem modum.) The title of the Latin canon is, "Precationis formula a concionatoribus, in concionum suarum ingressu imitanda." The heads of the prayer are then given, it being chiefly an intercessory prayer.

As to more private occasions the rubric says, "In the family, or in visitation of the sick, if the particular condition of the one or the other do require it, and in private, and in the closet, it is not supposed by our church, but that every one may ask his own wants in what form of words he shall think fit."

The following testimony of Bishop Hall, in his defence of the Liturgy, is in accordance with the foregoing. "Far be it from me to dishearten any good christian from the use of conceived prayer in his private devotions, and upon occasions also in public. I would hate to be guilty of pouring so much water upon the Spirit, to which I would gladly add oil rather. No, let the full soul pour itself forth in gracious expressions of its holy thoughts unto the bosom of the Almighty; let both the sudden flashes of our quick ejaculations, and the constant flames of our more fixed conceptions, mount up from the altar of a zealous heart unto the throne of grace. What I have professed concerning conceived prayers, is that which I have ever allowed, ever practised, both in private and public. God is a free spirit, and so should ours be in pouring out our voluntary devotions upon all occasions. Nothing hinders but that this liberty and a public Liturgy should be good friends, should go hand in hand together; and whoever would forcibly separate them, let them bear their own blame. The over-vigorous pressing of the Liturgy, to the justling out of preaching, or of conceived prayers, was never intended by the law-makers, or moderate governors of the Church."

pious thoughts and habits with them, without greatly neglecting and undervaluing others; but in the hands of their followers, and in the progress of time, they must lead to evil. Such has ever been the history of error and false doctrine in the Church of God. *d*

As to the sacraments, it must be admitted that nothing appertaining to our holy religion has been by some more exaggerated in theory, and idolized in practice, and on this very account more despised and neglected by others. Circumcision, appointed of old by God, was at some times most criminally neglected, at others most superstitiously regarded. During the forty years spent in the wilderness it was neglected perhaps altogether. In the time of the Apostles, there were those who said, "except ye be circumcised ye cannot be saved." The sacraments of the Christian Church, succeeding to those of the Jewish, have in like manner been abused by superstition, and neglected through irreligion and proud philosophy.

At some times and places, they, with their ceremonies of human appointment, have formed almost the whole of religion, so that it was not unjustly styled, *a religion of sacraments*. This perversion has led a few in different ages to set aside all outward ordinances, and to spiritualize religion, so as to adapt it rather to angels than men. It becomes us therefore to understand their true nature, and design, and to esteem and practise them accordingly. In the homily of our Church on the sacraments, it is written concerning the Lord's supper, "For, as that worthy man, St. Ambrose, saith, he is unworthy of the Lord, that otherwise doth celebrate that holy mystery, than it was delivered by him; neither can he be devout that otherwise doth presume, than it was given by the author. We must therefore take heed, lest of the memory, it be made a sacrifice," etc. Concerning the receiving of it, it says, "which, though it seem of small virtue to some, yet being rightly done by the faithful, it doth not only help their weakness, but strengtheneth and comforteth their inward man with peace and gladness, and maketh them thankful to their Redeemer with diligent care and godly conversation."

The favorite illustration of the sacraments among the ancient Fathers and the Reformers is, that they are "visible words." *e* The

d Mr. Palmer, in his work on the Church, (page 111. volume 1st.) says, "Heresy commonly appears in the character of goodness and piety." "We know from ecclesiastical history, that the founders of almost all heresies, as Arius, Pelagius, Nestorius, etc., have been famed for external piety and sanctity. Were it otherwise, indeed, the novelty of their opinions would excite too much apprehension among their hearers, to render them in reality dangerous; but when men of apparent sanctity and integrity, earnestly assert their doctrines as true and orthodox, then even the faithful may be in danger of forsaking their steadfastness."

e "Visible words." Bishop Jewell in his apology says, that Tertullian, Origen, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Chrysostom, Basil, Dionysius, and other Catholic Fathers, call the sacraments, "figures, signs, marks, badges, prints, copies, forms, seals, signets, similitudes,

same things which God sets before the mind in words, are set before us in visible and impressive signs, as water, bread and wine. As the word, or divine truth, mixed with faith is effectual to the salvation of him who reads or hears, but without faith is unto condemnation; so is the great truth of Christ crucified, impressively set forth in these visible words, or sensible signs of bread and wine, according to an express command, effectual to life or death, according as they are received worthily or unworthily, in faith or otherwise. Wherefore our homily says, "in the supper of the Lord is no vain ceremony, no bare sign, no untrue figure of a thing absent." The 25th article says, that "Sacraments ordained of Christ be certain sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us." So he does by that word which sets forth the same grace and good will in a different form of speech. The article goes on to say, "In such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves damnation, as St. Paul saith." Such also is the effect of the word as to baptism; "faith (says the article) is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God," but only "in them that receive it rightly." Thus it is with the word of God, which sets forth the same truths, and makes the same promises, that are set forth in baptism. Another representation often used, and borrowed from the word of God, is that of a sign or seal set to an instrument, and confirming what it contains. God's word contains a gracious covenant, full of precious promises, by believing which we become partakers of a divine nature, and are saved by hope; whenever we read it, we should rejoice in its assurances, and be certain of their fulfilment; but although God is not a man that he should lie, yet, in condescension to our slowness of heart to believe such wonderful things, he is pleased to adopt the same method which treacherous man is obliged to use, to give certainty to a contract. He says—behold, I put my seal to it with the hand of one of your brethren; in your own bodies do I put it—doubt no more.

Now, even between man and man, it often happens that if the seal be wanting, through some neglect, or loss, or necessity, if all else be clear, and the conditions of the contract fulfilled, on the one side, it would not be null and void; so much more on the part of God, if the seal were omitted, not through contempt, or disobedience,

patterns, representations, remembrances, and memories; and we make no doubt to say, together with the same doctors, that *these be certain visible words*, seals of righteousness, and tokens of grace." The American annotator remarks, "This terse phrase (visible words) expresses admirably the design of sacramental institutions;" and he quotes several sentences from Dr. Knox on the Lord's supper, enlarging upon the comparison. In another place, also, Bishop Jewell says, "Sacraments serve especially to direct and aid our faith, for they are, as St. Augustine calleth them, visible words, and seals and testimonies of the Gospel." (See chapter 6th; Jewell's Apology.)

but rather through some accident, or necessity, or perhaps invincible prejudice of education, the promises in the instrument (his word) would be fulfilled to the truly pious. But should this encourage any to say, the seal is not necessary; the word of promise, the covenant, is enough? Might we not indeed well fear, that, if we will not choose that God should put this his mark upon our bodies, as well as souls, we may by such disobedience to so plain a command, and despising of so gracious an act, forfeit all the mercies of the covenant? If one sin, however small, wilfully persisted in, be enough to destroy the soul, shewing a heart not right with God, how can any hope to be saved, in the deliberate neglect of such plain, and gracious, and admitted appointments of Heaven? In this view of them, this plain one, they assume an indescribable importance.

But is there no other virtue in them; no special blessing to the humble recipient beside? How are we to understand those awfully mysterious words of Christ, "This is my body given for you—this is my blood shed for you? What is meant by the communion of the body and blood of Christ—the partaking of the Lord's body—the eating his flesh, the drinking his blood? If, as all must allow, these are figurative expressions, still such strong figures must express some strong realities. What then do they mean?

The Church of Rome understands them in their most literal sense, and believes that the very bread and wine are converted into the body and blood of Christ, which are actually eaten and drank by the communicants.

The Lutherans, protesting against this, nevertheless maintained that though the bread and wine remained the same, yet Christ's body and blood were invisibly present, and actually partaken of by the faithful.

Other Protestants rejected both these absurdities, and held that as Christ's natural body and blood were not omnipresent while he was on earth, but only in one place at one time, so, when he ascended into Heaven, and took this body with him, it was there to remain until he come again to judge the world; and of course, that it is only after some spiritual and heavenly manner that we can all be partakers of his body and blood, while in the appointed supper we remember him, and shew forth his death until he come again. Our Church has retained the words of Christ, and of the Apostles, in the administration of the supper, to set forth the intimate and blessed communion, which by faith we then enjoy with our ascended Saviour. Some there are who understand them in a sense still stronger than we think could ever have been designed by our Lord in his word, or by the framers of the communion service. Although admitting that Christ's human nature with flesh and blood can only be in Heaven, and has not the attribute of omnipresence, yet, in consequence of its union with the divine person of Christ, it may, or must, in some mysterious way be ever with him, and thus be actually present with every communicant, and be partaken of by him. If this

doctrine be understood as the good Bishop Ridley explained it, there need be no evil apprehended from it. While he affirms most positively, that the natural body and blood of Christ can only be in Heaven, yet, by their union with the divine nature of Christ, they may be present by grace; "even as we say, the same sun, which in substance never removeth his place out of the heavens, is yet present here by its beams of light, and natural influence, when it shineth upon the earth. So God's word, and his sacraments, be, as it were, the beams of Christ, which is Sol Justitiæ, the Sun of Righteousness."

In like manner our homily on this sacrament exhorts us, by the advice of the council of Nice, "to lift up our minds by faith, and leaving these inferior and earthly things, there seek it, where the sun of righteousness ever shineth." And again, "to look up with faith upon the holy body and blood of thy God—to marvel with reverence—to touch it with thy mind, to receive it with the hand of thy heart, and take it fully with thy inward man." It is thus the Church teaches in her catechism, that "the body and blood of Christ are spiritually taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper." "The benefits whereof are the strengthening and refreshing of our souls, as our bodies are by the bread and wine." *f*

f Bishop Jewell and other Reformers do, in their writings, as in the book of Common Prayer, use the language of scripture in setting forth the intimate communion of Christians with their Lord in the right receiving of the Lord's supper—calling it a communion of the body and blood of Christ—but most carefully distinguishing it from either the transubstantiation of the Romish Church, or consubstantiation of the Lutheran. He tells us that the body and blood of Christ are not to be looked for in the elements, but in Heaven; are not to be partaken of in any carnal manner by the body, but only by faith with our souls. "Whosoever," he saith, "cometh to the holy table, and advanceth not his mind unto Heaven, there to feed upon Christ's body at the right hand of God, he knoweth not the meaning of these mysteries." Again, "We have no special regard to the bread, wine, and water, for they are creatures corruptible, as well after consecration as they were before; but we direct our faith only to the body and blood of Christ; not as being there really and fleshly present, but as sitting in Heaven at the right hand of God the Father." He quotes Tertullian as saying, "Christ must be received in cause of life—he must be eaten by hearing—must be chewed by understanding—and must be digested by faith." He quotes St. Cyprian as saying, "What meat is to the flesh, that is faith to the soul. To believe in him (Christ) is to eat him; the drinking, what is it else but to live by him?"

Jewell himself says, "Although we do not touch the body of Christ with teeth and mouth, yet we hold him fast, and eat him by faith, by understanding and spirit." Therefore, he says, when we come to the communion, we are exhorted to "lift up our hearts," and direct our minds to heaven, because he is there by whom we must be fed and live. He quotes Cyril and others to the same effect: "And Cyril saith, when we come to receive these holy mysteries, all gross imaginations must quite be banished." The council of Nice, as it is

But is this communion with our ascended Lord, this partaking of the benefits of his broken body and shed blood, to be confined to the memorial of his death in the use of the consecrated elements? Does he not at any other time dwell in our hearts by faith, and we in him? Then should we be perpetually, each hour partaking of the emblems, that he may evermore dwell in us, and we in him? It is doubtless with the same exalted Lord and Saviour, in his divine person containing the very man and very God, that we commune by faith and love in the use of the word, and prayer, and holy meditation. That the partaking of these sacramental symbols is not indispensable to communion with Christ in the judgment of our Church, she teaches in one of her rubrics, where she declares that if by extremity of sickness, or other impediment, one who is desirous of the supper cannot obtain it, yet if the same be a true penitent and believer in Christ, and be thankful for his death, "he doth eat and drink the body and blood of our Saviour Christ profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the sacrament with his mouth." *g*

Shall any one however now say, I will remember my Saviour on my bed—I will commune with him through his blessed word—I will lift up my heart to him in prayer, and by faith take hold of his wounded body and make it mine, and not approach the table of the Lord, seeing it is needless, or I may do it unworthily to my condemnation? If any shall thus slight the last appointment of our Lord for such near and dear communion with him, he is the very man with whom the Lord will refuse to commune in any other way, and

alleged by some, in Greek plainly forbiddeth us to be basely affectioned, or bent, towards the bread and wine which are set before us.

And as Chrysostom very aptly writeth, we say that the body of Christ is the dead carcass, and we ourselves must be the eagles; meaning thereby that we must fly on high, if we will come to the body of Christ, for this table is a table of eagles, and not of jays. And St. Augustine saith, "How shall I hold him, being absent? How shall I reach my hand up to Heaven to lay hold of him sitting there? He answereth: Reach hither thy faith, and then thou hast laid hold of him." The American annotator very justly remarks on this subject, that "The belief of the real presence of Christ's body in the Communion soon generated the opinion that the celebration of the rite was an actual repetition of the sacrifice of Christ. Hence readily arose the belief, that it must be equally available for spiritual benefit with the one great sacrifice on the cross. The priests were not long in persuading the ignorant multitude that the application of these benefits was in their power; and joining this error with the doctrine of purgatory, set up a pretence to the power of aiding souls in the torment of that place of temporary punishment, by the celebration of masses in their behalf." See 6th Chap. Jewell's Apology.

g Mr. Palmer himself, though holding very high views in relation to the sacraments, says, "That it is generally admitted, that in a case of necessity, a sincere wish to receive the sacraments, together with the true faith, is sufficient to produce the effect of the sacraments." Vol. 2, p. 414.

at any other time. To such an one the Lord will not reveal or impart himself. Whosoever shall thus refuse, or neglect, to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God in the holy supper, acknowledging it to be a command of Christ, cannot be a true disciple.

But whatever may be the differences of opinion as to the benefits of the sacraments, there is one way in which both ministers and people may honor them, and increase their efficacy, and about which there can be no diversity of sentiment: I mean a due preparation for, and solemn administration of them. There may be, and often has been, the most extravagant and superstitious faith in them, connected with the most corrupt administration of them. Indeed, it might be expected that an over-estimate of their intrinsic virtue would lead to the careless performance of them, since the mere act is so mighty in its efficacy.

In relation to the Lord's supper, let us of the ministry be most faithful in stating the proper qualifications for it—a true repentance, a lively faith, and universal charity, and in discouraging the approach of any who are destitute of the same, lest we minister to their condemnation. Let the table of the Lord be rendered more profitable to the faithful, by repelling the unfaithful from it. Faithful discourses previous to each communion, addressed especially to communicants, will usually effect this separation with least pain, while they will serve to strengthen the faithful, and keep them from falling.

As to the frequency of the supper, so various are the circumstances of the parishes, that it is difficult to give advice suitable to all. But surely even in those most unfavorably situated, the minister should endeavor to administer it not less than four times in the year, selecting those seasons marked out by the Church; and, in the case of those having more than one congregation, bringing it as near those seasons as may be practicable. In regard to congregations in towns, where a part of the service may be read at an early hour without departing from the design of the Church, none could wish the communion to be less than a monthly service. If the ministers will by pious and faithful preaching, and the people by due private devotions, prepare for the celebration of this holy feast, great must be the esteem in which it would be held in the simplest view that can be taken of it, and great the blessing of God upon it.

So also in relation to baptism; if, without undertaking to be positive as to the certain and precise effects of it—without tying the grace inseparably to the moment and act of its administration, we were to regard it as a great privilege to bring our children to the font; if we were to hasten to do it, lest he who bade the children of Israel appear before him on the eighth day should be offended at our delay; if parents and sponsors were exhorted and aided to prepare for the dedication, with prayer and suitable reading; if times, as of old, were set apart for the service; if lectures and exhortations preceded and followed after; if parents and children were often reminded of their baptismal vows; if pious sponsors only were admitted, and the true intent of the Church in all her provisions only kept

in view, and enforced; surely none would doubt but that our Lord favorably alloweth this charitable work of ours in bringing children to his holy baptism, when they should see how it led step by step to a full and open profession, at an early age, of pure and undefiled religion.

Let us all be more earnestly engaged in such labors, and we shall be less disposed to dispute about things which God has not revealed to us.

The rule applied to the Church and Ministry.

Let us proceed to the consideration of the Church, and the Ministry, to which it is highly important that this law be wisely applied, that they be not, on the one hand, too lightly esteemed in the great economy of redemption, nor, on the other, magnified beyond their measure. There ever have been those who have made almost nothing, and those who have made almost every thing of them. In this, as in all other things, "a just weight is the Lord's delight, while a false balance is his abomination;" and "he that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord." It becomes us in the fear of God to seek the truth, and endeavor to "judge righteous judgment." On this subject we think the framers of our articles and liturgy displayed great wisdom, not more in what they said, than in what they left unsaid; for as there are things in which we are bound to "judge righteous judgment," so there are things in which we are to "judge not."

What then is their judgment?

In the communion service they call the Church—"the mystical body of Christ," that is, "the blessed company of all faithful people." In the 19th Article they define it to be "a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same:" they do not undertake to say precisely with what degree of purity the word of God is to be preached, but doubtless meant that the unadulterated scriptures were to be received, read, and preached, and not any other than those acknowledged as such. In the very same article they speak of the Church of Rome as erring in the faith, and in other things, yet still admit her title to the name of Church. Neither do they specify what things are indispensably requisite to the due administration of the ordinances.

In the 23d Article they declare, that "it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen, and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard." It may be said that in this also there is no specification determining who are considered the proper officers in Christ's Church indispensable to min-

isterial acts. This is admitted to be the case, and yet in other places, they leave no room to doubt what they and the Church ever since believe to be the path of duty in this respect, and determine to pursue. In the preface to our Ordination Services it is thus written, "It is evident unto all men, diligently reading holy scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been three Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church,—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Which offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by public prayer, with imposition of hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful authority. And therefore, to the intent that these orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed in this Church, no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, in this Church, or suffered to execute any of the sacred functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had Episcopal consecration or ordination." In the services that follow there is also a recognition of the scriptural sanction alluded to in this preface.

From this it plainly appears that our Reformers considered our form of government to be that which was established by the Apostles, and practised by the primitive christians, as evinced by the New Testament and the writings of the Fathers, and that it had ever since been in the Church. How could they then, in reforming the Church from the corruptions of Popery, think of altering this feature in the frame-work thereof? Since some officers and some government must be, and these were already in possession, and had come down from the Apostles themselves, and seemed to have such scriptural authority, how could she think of dismissing them for some that were untried? There were, however, some of the reforming ministers, and people on the continent, who were driven out of the Church of Rome under the most awful anathema, having among them only two of those orders, viz. Priests, and Deacons,—who to this day continue without Bishops, and whose example has been followed by some christian societies in England and America. Some of their leaders on the Continent lamented for a time the deficiency, and spoke in high terms of the Episcopal Office, though not regarding it as indispensable to a Church. Our forefathers in England lived on terms of great kindness with them, notwithstanding this difference, and felt that they were laboring in one common cause against the great corruptor of the faith. It has however been thought by some, especially in these latter days, that, however well they may have said what they have said, in the documents I have quoted, they should have said more; and indeed that either false charity, or a want of moral courage, prevented them from declaring that the defect alluded to in the Continental Churches was a vital one, destructive of their claims to be branches of the "One Catholic and Apostolic Church." Much rather let us say with the present Bishop of Lon-

don, "we believe their caution to have proceeded rather from a religious fear of deciding peremptorily, that which is not peremptorily decided in the word of God, and excluding from any of the benefits of the christian economy those who have not been formally excluded therefrom by Jesus Christ and his Apostles." Many were the considerations which no doubt led them, and which should lead christians in every age, to hesitate how they pronounce a sentence of exclusion from Christ's Church on those who are by faith vitally united to the head. They had seen how God made those laboring under this defect in the outward church nevertheless "partakers of the like gift of grace with them," and well might they fear to call them, in any sense, "common or unclean." While repelling indignantly the charges of schism, and heresy, and separation from the unity of Christ's Church, so freely made against them by the Church of Rome, they might well hesitate and refuse to follow this example in relation to their fellow soldiers, in Christ, upon the Continent. Seeing that it is the Church which Christ loved and gave himself for—which he has purchased with his precious blood—ought we not to be very fearful how we contract its bounds, and reduce its numbers within the limits which Christ hath established, lest we should only seem to exclude some from the benefits of his death, and the promises of his word? I know that there are those, who, out of regard to the order of Christ's Church, feel bound to adopt certain views of its limits, who would shrink from the idea of excluding from the benefits of Christ's death, or denying the true piety of many who are without the supposed pale; but is it not a consideration which should make us all most cautious how we draw the line, that in proportion to the numbers of truly pious whom that line shall leave out of the Church which Christ purchased, and loves as his spouse, and watches over so tenderly, we diminish the great importance of being in the Church, and tempt many to be as well satisfied with uncovenanted as covenanted mercies; since they will judge by what they see in the lives of those around them, rather than by doubtful definition? And while we should fear to lose the esteem and good will of the sober minded and the pious, and to tempt ourselves to improper thoughts and words towards the outcast, by excluding some whom Christ has included, should we not also fear to offend him by rash judgment, lest he withdraw some of his rich favors from us? If the Church be his glorious temple, and christians be all of them so many living stones in the same, should we not remember how the builders of old would have rejected even himself, although he became the very head of the corner of the glorious Church? and if we shall undertake to reject any of those whom he has chosen to be living stones in his temple, must it not be an offence to him, and injurious to ourselves, rather than others, for it is not ours to choose or reject? There is but one who shutteth and no man openeth, and who openeth and no man shutteth. And I would add, that if we desire to have and deserve the name of Catholic, or universal, that also should make us careful not to contract the Redeemer's kingdom within smaller

bounds than he has appointed, lest our name and conduct should be at variance.

If it be said, in answer to this charge of seeming uncharitableness in thus excluding from the Church of Christ persons of whose true piety and salvation there is no doubt, that there is the same uncharitableness in throwing the heathen on the outside of its pale, and leaving them to the uncovenanted mercies of God, while we hope that some of them will be saved, we reply, that beside the unkindness of classing together the true worshippers of our Lord, with those who bow down to idols, it is more easy to conceive how God can have compassion on an ignorant heathen, whose heart has yet yielded to such influences of the spirit as may have been vouchsafed him, than on one who, born as it were in the very bosom of the Church, and living all around it, and invited to enter it, shall nevertheless refuse so to do.

In the utterance of these sentiments, I feel sure that I am only expressing the views which have generally been held by the ministers and members of our Church in England and America, from the Reformation to the present time. It were easy to fill a volume with these sentiments from the works of our English Bishops and divines. Puller, in his work on the Moderation of the Church of England, which he proved in a great variety of ways, says, "Other Churches have not been despised by her, if in sundry instances they have not arrived unto her perfection in purity of doctrine, and order of discipline; nor does she call herself, in distinction from other true Churches, the Catholic Church, as of old the Arians did." "While retaining the blessing of Episcopal government, yet such is the moderation of our Church, she imputes the want of the same in other Reformed Churches, not so much to any fault of those Churches themselves, but rather attributes it to the injury of the times."—p. 419. He shews how she observed this same moderation towards the Church of Rome, and quoting from Casaubon, says, "The denying the Church of Rome the being of a Church, (which some Protestants rashly, and ignorantly, and rigidly, and uncharitably have done) hath been a great hindrance of Reformation; and I verily believe that the opinion most Papists are kept in, that the religion of Protestants is a new religion, is not of little force to keep them averse from it to this day." "Because they still keep to the main fundamentals, we do not exclude them from the Catholic Church, though by their hard and rigid censures, and excommunication of us and others that do not hold with them, they do very much hazard their right and title to the said Catholic Church, as much as by anything."

Quoting from Bishop Bramhall also, he says, "that greater is her schism for refusing to be a fellow member with other churches, in the universal Church of Christ, and challenging to be the head, the soul, the fountain of all others."

Our Church, though she evidently regards that of Rome as the Antichrist, (as may be seen in the homilies) yet knows that it is in the temple, or church of God, that Antichrist sits; and therefore only

calls upon us to separate from her, declaring that she "hath erred not only in living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith."

As to those on the Continent, it is needless to show by quotation that our Reformers never undertook to deny them a place in the Universal Church. Even Archbishop Laud, in his dying address, calls them churches; speaking of the Church of England he says, "It hath flourished and been a shelter to other neighboring churches, when storms have driven upon them."

But now it may be asked, are all who call themselves by the name of Christ—all societies which call themselves churches of Christ—no matter how schismatical and heretical, to be accounted and treated as such? Is there no line which divides the true from the false?

To this we answer, that although such line can only be certainly known to God, whose hand alone has power to draw it, yet his Church upon earth, fallible as she is, must, in his fear, endeavor to make such difference as God shall approve. Discipline there must be in the Church. Evil members must be cut off from others; and sometimes numbers combining together, for evil must be excluded from the communion of a Church. But as it is utterly impossible for any but God infallibly to decide what degree of error in doctrine and viciousness of life cuts off even an individual from hope, so the Church in expelling a member does it with a perfect consciousness, and full acknowledgment, that she may err, and that what she does on earth may not always be ratified in Heaven, because it is not always done according to the will of Heaven. So also in separating large numbers from a church, in refusing fellowship with them, in pronouncing that they have so erred from the faith and discipline of Christ's Church that they ought not to be communed with as parts thereof, or that they are most imperfect and diseased parts, we should do it with a trembling conviction of our fallibility, and with an acknowledgment that God may see otherwise. Nevertheless, we are bound to separate individuals who seem to be unsound, lest they corrupt others, and so must refuse fellowship with societies, so far as we think they have departed from the true faith or order, thus to show our condemnation of their errors, and that we may not be partakers with them, or be led by them. If they seek readmission into our body, we may require such terms as shall seem best calculated to correct the evil; we may reordain ministers, if we think their ordination defective; and yet all this may be, without a positive belief and declaration that their churches were not members of the universal church, the body of Christ. The Church of Rome stands alone in that fearful work of cutting off kingdoms and churches from Christ. The Church of England, though at times most unnecessarily, and, as we think, improperly deserted by large portions of her members, forming themselves into distinct societies, has never yet ventured on the fearful work of excommunication from the body of Christ, though she reordains their ministers, and confirms their private members, when they return to her bosom, according to her own solemn forms. Whoever has examined but a small part of

what has been written on the nature and guilt of heresy and schism, and seen to what extent it must reach ere it amounts to separation from the body of Christ, needs not be told that the wisest and best have been most disposed to leave this decision in the hands of God alone; although some action must be had, in the way of discipline, even by fallible man. *h*

h In the views which I have here taken of the proper mode of regarding and treating those who are in a state of schism or separation from a national church, or have departed from the order and discipline of the primitive and universal church, I am strengthened by what Mr. Palmer has said of such in his elaborate work on the Church, and by comparing his sentiments with those of others.

After saying that salvation is promised to faith in Christ only, though, from the goodness of God, we may have hope for some to whom Christ is not revealed, nor salvation promised, he adds, "On the same principle I maintain that salvation is only offered in *the Church of Christ* by revelation, and that all men, to whom the Gospel is preached, must be members of this church, when sufficiently proposed to them, on pain of being excluded from the favor of God for ever." (Page 36. volume 1st.)

Again, "Them that are without, God judgeth; but all the promises of God are to his church: his grace is given in the Church: the Apostles and teachers sent from God are in the Church. We know nothing from revelation of any grace, any Christian ministry, any sacraments, or any salvation beyond the Church." (Page 406. volume 2d.)

Now if this be so, how important, that the bounds of the Church be well defined, that none may be excluded through ignorance thereof; and how careful should we be in charging any with being without the pale, except on good authority. Mr. Palmer has written much on the subject, but, as we think, most unsatisfactorily. As to the degree of heresy, or the kind of schism which cuts off from the Church of Christ; or what body, whether a particular church, or the church Catholic, or what portion of the same, has the power of excision, he can afford no certain information. Some persons he speaks of as imperfect members of the Church; some churches, those of the Continent, as not being churches of Christ, and yet not cut off, but only separated from the external communion of the Church of Christ. Concerning however the Church of Scotland, with all its sects, he unhesitatingly pronounces that "they form no part of the Church of Christ:" "that all the temporal enactments and powers of the whole world could not cure this fault, nor render them a portion of the Church of Christ." (Page 629. volume 1st.)

As to the Roman Catholics, he admits those in Italy and on the Continent to be true Churches of Christ, though corrupted with false doctrine and evil practices, while he affirms that those of England, and their descendants in America, are not parts of the Church of Christ, because they were schismatics from the Church of England, and because it is doubtful whether their Bishops were formally consecrated by three Bishops, according to the primitive and general practice of the Church. He thinks it irregular on the part of the English Church to admit these ordinations; but says it was doubtless done in the way of charity, and in the hope of reclaiming them. Of course for the same reason the American Church should disallow

In relation to the ministry of the Church, to which, under the

their ordination, or else allow the ordination of all other denominations in the same hope.

Into such doubts, perplexities and difficulties, are we brought by attempting, in a spirit bordering on infallibility, to decide such questions. Were it not better to pronounce them wrong in doctrine, discipline, practice, where we think them contrary to God's word and Apostolic practice, to protest against separation and schism, and decline fellowship in the things wherein we think they have erred, so as to deserve such action on our part; but forbear to undertake a task so fearful as that of pronouncing large bodies of Christians to be absolutely cut off from the Church of God?

Very different are the views of Bishop Jewell, of Hooker, and others of the Reformers. Bishop Jewell, condemning the Romanists for confining the grace of God to the Church, as defined by them, having the Pope for its head, says "God's grace is promised only to a good mind, and to any one that feareth him; not to sees and successions." Mr. Palmer says it is promised only to the Church, and then defines the Church so as to cut off immense numbers of Christians who give every evidence of sound faith, and pious lives.

The following are the sentiments of Mr. Hooker. "The Church of God may therefore contain both them that are not his, yet must be reputed his, by us who know not their inward thoughts; and them whose apparent wickedness testifyeth, even in the sight of the whole world, that God abhorreth them." For to this, and no other purpose, are meant those parables which our Saviour in the Gospel hath, concerning mixture of virtue with vice, light with darkness, truth with error, as well and openly seen and known, as a cunningly cloaked mixture. That which separateth therefore utterly, that which cutteth off clear from the visible Church of Christ, is plain Apostasie, direct denial, utter rejection of the whole Christian faith, as far as the same is professedly different from infidelity. Heretics, as touching those points of doctrine wherein they fail; schismatics, as touching the quarrels for which, or the duties wherein they divide themselves from their brethren; loose, licentious and wicked persons, as touching their several offences and crimes, have all forsaken the true Church of God; the Church which is sound and sincere in the doctrine which they corrupt; the Church which keepeth the bond of unity which they violate; the Church which walketh in the laws of righteousness which they transgress; this very true Church of Christ they have left—*howbeit*, not altogether left, nor forsaken simply (that is entirely) the Church, on the main foundations whereof they continue built, notwithstanding these breaches, whereby they are rent at the top asunder. Now because for redress of professed errors and open schemes, it is, and must be, the Church's care, that all may in outward conformity be one; as the laudible politic of former days, even so our own, to that end and purpose, hath established divers laws, the moderate severity whereof is a mean both to stay the rest, and to reclaim those that have been led away." (Ecclesiastical Polity, 5th book.)

In consistency with the above, when speaking, in his third book, of the Church of Rome, he says, "For, even as the Apostle doth say of Israel, that they are in one respect enemies, but in another beloved

present head, the rule was to be applied, I will only remark, that

of God; in like sort with Rome, we dare not communicate concerning sundry her grievous and gross abominations, yet touching those nearer parts of Christian truth wherein they constantly persist, we gladly acknowledge them to be of the family of Jesus Christ." Speaking in the same place of the dissenters who then excommunicated not only the Church of Rome, but that of England also, he adds: "As those are who make the Church of Rome utterly no church at all, by reason of so many so grievous errors in their doctrine; so we have them amongst us who, in pretence of imagined corruptions of our discipline, do give even as hard a judgment of the Church of England herself. But whatsoever either the one or the other do teach, we must acknowledge even heretics themselves to be, though a maimed part, yet a part of the visible Church."

In another place, applying the principle which he had set forth, he says, "In which respect, for mine own part, although I see that certain reformed churches, the Scottish especially, and French, have not that which best agreeth with sacred scripture, I mean the government by Bishops," yet he adds "This their defect and imperfection I had rather lament, than exagitate, considering that men oftentimes without any fault of their own may be driven to want that kind of politic or rejiment which is best, and to content themselves with that which either the irremediable error of former time, or the necessity of the present, hath cast upon them."

It is sometimes asked, if notwithstanding, as is believed, an Apostolic constitution of the Church, with a gradation of officers, and the continuance of the same with all reverence and fidelity for more than fifteen hundred years, there may under certain circumstances be a partial departure, without losing fellowship with the Catholic Church, the body of Christ, and forfeiting the promises of the Covenant, what advantage have those who have adhered to, and what evils do they suffer who have departed from, the appointed order? Why may not any others depart when it may seem expedient, seeing that they may still retain the most important thing, a part in the Church of God?

To this it may be replied, there is great difference between a loss, and the loss of all; between a sin unto death, and a sin not unto death; between life, though with the loss of some of our limbs, and the death of the whole body; between an estrangement in some things, and total separation from some individual, or body. Are there not many reasons why we should greatly prefer, conscientiously adhere to, and on no account consent to depart from, our own Church, seeing, beside other advantages of a Liturgy, etc. we believe it to be the lineal descendant of the Apostolic Church, constituted, as that was, in conformity with the will of God, and handed down to us from age to age; although we cannot be certain that any omission, in some part thereof, no matter for what cause, must be absolutely destructive to its existence as a Church? Can we not lament and condemn a departure from this order in others, and endeavor by all proper means to persuade them to return to it, believing that it is more or less sinful not to do it, and that many judgments of God are inflicted on men for their deviation from his appointment? May we not even decline fellowship with them in those things wherein we think they are defective, and yet not feel bound by consistency,

while we dare not lessen our office, seeing that God has appointed it such as it is, and will make us give an account to him, so we must not magnify it by claiming more of authority and grace than is given us to use and bestow. It is one of the great proofs of the divine appointment of the ministry, that whenever it is exercised faithfully and piously, it is most highly honoured of man, and greatly blessed of God. No man will despise even the youth of a Timothy, who is an example to believers in all good things. At all times, and in all countries, faithful ministers have had as much influence as was safe either for themselves or others. Unhappily for religion, in times when they were not faithful, the doctrines of the Gospel have been perverted so as to give them a tremendous power which God never designed. To such a pitch was this carried, that God, at one time, raised up violent reformers, who boldly proclaimed to the world the usurpations and corruptions of the priesthood; and at another,

and sound reasoning, to deny any validity whatever to their ministration, and any connexion of the churches with the body of Christ? Does the conduct of God in regard to his people Israel justify such a course on our part? Notwithstanding all their sins, neglects and rebellions, and all his heavy judgments on them, did he ever cast them off until they rejected himself; "when he came to his own, and his own received him not?" Even in relation to the ten tribes, who under Jeroboam so far revolted as to desert the temple, the great instrument of unity amongst them, and to set up worship at other places, and to have other priests than of the tribe of Levi, contrary to express command, it does not appear that they were cast away and ceased to be any of God's people, although the dreadful judgments of God upon them, and the utter extirpation of their leaders, faintly show the heavy displeasure of God, and may well be adduced in every age as awful warnings against schism and disobedience.

Shall we not be much more likely to effect our object, the more perfect establishment of the members of our Church in its just claims, and true advantages, and in the persuading others candidly to examine the same, when we follow the example of God towards his erring people, than by the harsher method of declaring them aliens from the kingdom of Christ, which is not more offensive than unwarranted by any clear word of God? Remember that "a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city:" we ought to be most careful how we use an argument so calculated to offend, except indeed it be plainly written in God's word, or most unavoidably inferred from it.

Do we not sometimes err in our judgments on such subjects by confounding together the perfection of God's laws, and the duty of implicit obedience to his institutions, things undoubted, and the manner in which those are to be regarded and treated who are not perfect in all things to observe and do them? God wills and commands us to be perfect, even as he is; and yet makes allowance for our imperfection. God gave good laws and institutions to his ancient people, and yet he did not discard them, when, through the hardness of their hearts, they disobeyed some of them most grievously, but, as it were, for a time permitted it.

in awful judgment permitted, by a dreadful reaction, the tyranny of the priesthood, and the superstition of the people, to lead to one of the most atrocious revolutions, under the banners of infidelity and anarchy, that ever afflicted the human race—when the streets of Paris literally flowed with the blood of the slain. Even now, we hear it sometimes almost lamented that Protestant ministers have not more of that command over the laity, which those of the Church of Rome so effectually exercise, as in some raging mob, when the members of that Church are engaged in a strife so deadly, that nothing but the presence of a Priest, and the dread of excommunication, can quell its fury; but had we not better inquire why it is, that that mighty power is not exerted in preventing the evil beforehand, by teaching the people to believe in an ever-present God, and fear his anger, far more than the anathema of the priest? Surely none can read and know of the abuse of the mighty power of that priesthood, and wish that there were more like it on the earth.

The rule applied to some lesser matters, as ceremonies, etc.

Let us now consider, how, according to the wise law of due proportion, which bids us attend to great things mainly, but not despise little things, we ought to esteem some of those things called ceremonies, usages relating to churches, times of prayer, etc. By disputes concerning them in times past, religion has suffered no little injury. May the Great Head of the Church prevent it in all time to come. That religion has sometimes been burthened with so many ceremonies as to become a yoke of bondage, none can doubt. St. Augustine complains that in his time, "Religion, which God in his mercy hath made free, with few and clear sacraments, is made more burthensome than ever was the Jewish." The same complaint was made by the Reformers concerning the Church of Rome. In one of the prefaces of the Church of England, she declares, as a reason for abolishing many of them, "that the excessive number of them was so great, and many of them so dark, that they did more confound and darken, than declare and set forth Christ's benefits unto us." If any be still disposed to continue the idle charge of too much assimilation to the Church of Rome, in respect to any such things, on the part of the Episcopal Church of England, or America, let them only think upon the number of those things which were cast off, as worse than useless. Let them only compare the majestic simplicity of our ceremonies, with the fantastic variety of those of Rome at this very day. Take, for instance, the solemn office of ordination in the two churches, concerning which Bishop Pilkington, speaking of the vain ceremonies of the Romanists, and the simplicity of the ancients, which latter was adopted by the Reformers, says, quoting from an early writer, "In making their priests and bishops, they used no more ceremonies than to bring him that was to be called a Bishop to kneel before the altar, to lay the Bible on his head, and the Bishop his hands also, with certain prayers and

salutations. This simple fashion was used of old time, without any further ado. And yet our Bishops which follow this ancient simplicity, are blamed that they have devised new fashions of their own, which were never heard of before." *i*

Bishop Taylor remarks, "that there is reason to celebrate and honor the wisdom and prudence of the Church of England, which hath, in all her offices, retained but one ritual or ceremony, that is not of divine ordinance, or Apostolic practice; and that is, the cross in Baptism; which, though it be a significant ceremony, and of no other use, yet as it is a compliance with the practice of all ancient Churches, so it is very innocent in itself, and being one and alone, is in no regard troublesome." Moreover, she hath taken care to declare concerning this, "that the sign of the cross, used in baptism, is no part of the substance of the sacrament, neither doth add to the virtue and perfection of it."

Our American Church has left it optional with the persons pre-

i In adopting this and other things from the Fathers, which the Romanists charged as innovations, Bishop Pilkington says very happily, "*Hæc novitas, non est novitas, sed vera vetustas.*" The Reformers ever delighted, as well they might, to go back to the times nearest the Apostles, not merely as an answer to the Romanists, who pretended to claim the Fathers as being for them, but because, when the thing was good in itself, and according to God's word, it was dearer to them for its ancient observance, and received confirmation from that fact. Still it was no blind and superstitious reverence for old ways, which actuated them. Bishop Pilkington says in another place, "The text of Jeremiah, that bids them search out the old way, and walk in it, does not mean all old ways; but he says—search of the old ways which of them is good, and walk in it; as though he should say, all old ways are not good. If all old ways were good, he would not bid them try which were good; therefore it is not enough to have it old, but to have it good also, and then to cleave to it." "Evil has been from the beginning, as well as good; and there have been in all ages evil Fathers, as well as good. Cyprian therefore notes well and goodly, saying, that "Christ said not, that he was ancient custom, but that he was truth itself. To follow Christ then, and his doctrine, is to follow the true old way; for he is both the truth itself, and was from the beginning; and those Fathers who follow not his steps, are not our mark to follow, though the world do never so much reverence them." (See works of Pilkington, page 537.)

Bishop Ridley says, "The Fathers have both herbs and weeds; and Papists commonly gather the weeds, and leave the herbs. And they (the Fathers) speak many times more vehemently in sound of words, than they did mean indeed, or than they would have done, if they had foreseen what sophistical wranglers should have succeeded them." "In all ages the devil hath stirred up some light heads to esteem the sacraments but lightly, as to be empty and bare signs; whom the Fathers have resisted so fiercely, that in their fervor they seem, in sound of words, to run too far the other way, and to give too much to the sacraments, when they did think more measurably." (See works of Bishop Ridley, page 114. Parker Library.)

senting the child, to have it used or not, though we believe the omission is never required. The author, in the course of a ministry of more than thirty years, does not recollect ever to have heard a scruple concerning it. As to ceremonies and traditions in general, the Church has wisely decided, that it is not necessary "that they should be in all places one, or utterly alike; for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners; so that nothing be ordained against God's word." See Article 34.

It must however be acknowledged, that there have been times when some of her defenders, as well as of her enemies, have, on some points of outward observance, violated this rule of proportion, to the sad dishonor of religion. In the time of Queen Elizabeth especially, herself too much given to the pomp and circumstance of worship, the disputes about vestments, and some other things, were most disgraceful to religion. At a later period, the Biographer of Mr. Hooker, (the Bishop of Exeter) in his dedication to Charles II., speaking of the causes which led to the downfall of the Church in the days of Cromwell, says, that besides the sins of the people, "The strength of the Church was much decayed and undermined, before it was openly battered, partly by some superfluous, illegal, and unauthorized innovations in point of ceremony, which some affected to use in public, and impose upon others;" and again, because "They were immoderately intent upon mere formalities, and more zealous for an outward conformity to those shadows, than for that inward or outward conformity with Christ, in holy hearts and unblameable lives, which most adorn true religion." Concerning some of these things, and those who violently opposed them, Mr. Hooker had before said, "By them which trouble us with these doubts, we would more willingly be resolved of a greater doubt: whether it be not a taking of God's name in vain, to debase religion with such frivolous disputes; a sin to bestow time and labor about them." Bishop Jewell, also, was truly mortified at the attempt to impose some things on those who were averse, saying of himself and his fellow Reformers, "We are not so free from more important cares, as to be able to set such value on these trifles;" and well does his American Biographer and Annotator say, that it is no wonder "they should have felt vexed at petty enactments about hoods and capes, which hardly deserve a milder epithet than superlatively ridiculous." (See p. 50, *Memoirs of Jewell*, by the present Bishop of Maryland; which, together with Jewell's *Apology*, is worthy of being read by all the ministers and members of our Church.) It is not wonderful that Bishop Burnet, and other wise men, should have condemned the conduct of some, who, having rule in the Church of England, were too strenuous in insisting upon some trivial matters, instead of following the advice of Nazianzen, the Father who said, "Come, let us give way, that so we may overcome; let us grant a little, that so we may gain a great deal—even peace."

Still, however, though religion has been deeply wounded in the

house of her friends, by bitter strifes and persecution about such things, yet are they not to be set aside as unworthy of our regard. Decent apparel, houses of worship, postures of prayer, times and seasons for prayer, public and private, are deserving of our regard.

As to the respect due to the temples of religion, although the minds and bodies of Christians are the chief temples of God, in which he delights to dwell, and which should be kept pure and holy; although our outward houses of worship are only holy because God's people are holy who resort thither, and exercise themselves in holy and heavenly things; yet there is an attention due to them, the neglect of which cannot but be offensive to God. In a few passages from one of our homilies, we will present this duty to the ministers and members of the diocese, and beg them to take heed thereto. "It is a common custom, when any intend to have their friends and neighbors to come to their houses, to eat or drink with them, or to have any solemn assembly, to treat and talk of any matter, they will have their houses, which they keep in continual reparation, to be clean and fine, lest they should be counted sluttish, or little to regard their friends and neighbors. How much more then ought the house of God, which we commonly call the church, to be sufficiently repaired in all places, and to be honorably adorned and garnished, and to be kept clean and sweet, to the comfort of the people that shall resort thereto." "If a man's private house wherein he dwelleth be decayed, he will never cease till it be restored up again. Yea, if his barn wherein he keepeth his corn be out of reparation, what diligence useth he, to make it in perfect state again. If his stable for his horse, yea, the sty for his swine, be not able to hold out water and wind, how careful is he to do cost thereon. And shall we be so mindful of our common base houses, deputed to so vile employment, and be forgetful towards the house of God, where be treated the words of our eternal salvation, wherein be administered the sacraments and mysteries of our redemption?" *j*

I hope that these sentences will not pass unheeded where they are needed, and that when the churches are thus prepared, the whole conduct of the worshippers may, without superstition, be devout, reverent, and becoming the object for which they are erected, and kept in order, both in, and around the house; remembering that "the Lord is in his holy temple," and that on no occasion did he

j If any should suppose that the Reformers were not sufficiently particular in banishing from the Church things which were abused to evil purposes, let them remember their zeal in removing those altars, at which the Lord's supper had been turned into a sacrifice, and the Christian minister made far more of a sacrificer than the Jewish priest; how, in place thereof, they substituted a simple table, on which a supper, after the example of our Lord, and by his command, was spread in remembrance of his death. Let them read also the homily on the peril of Idolatry, wherein all kinds of images, and pictures in churches, are condemned, whether of our Lord, or of saints.

show more holy indignation while on earth, than in punishing a profanation of his house.

As to the frequency of attendance upon it, so various are the circumstances of our people, so scattered their abodes, so many are the difficulties of assembling, that it is impossible to say any thing more than that they must meet less frequently, than could be wished, though they might meet much oftener than they do, if the importance of it were duly estimated. But it is a matter of rejoicing, that by the multiplication of Bibles, and pious books of all kinds, through the medium of the press, and the increase of education, such frequent assemblages are not now so necessary to us, as they were to the ancients, or to our Fathers: since each of us in his own home, and with his family, may do each day, what God caused to be done in his temple for our example; offer up our daily morning and evening sacrifices unto the praise of his name.

Yea more, although as individuals, we cannot be ever so near some temple of religion, whose door is always open to receive us, yet the ears of the Lord of the temple are ever open to hear the most secret whispers of our hearts, breathing forth our prayers and praises. And here let me say to my brethren of the ministry, and of the laity, on the counsel, and after the example, of the devout and holy of every age, the greatest punctuality which is practicable to us, in respect to the times and seasons, for private as well as public prayer, ought to be observed by us; for in nothing with which we have to do, is method, and a conscientious attention to duty, more necessary to success, than in prayer and holy reading. Bishop Butler, speaking of secret prayer, says, "It comprehends not only devotions before men begin, and after they have ended the business of the day, but such as also may be performed while they are employed in it, or even in company. And truly, if, besides our more set devotions morning and evening, all of us would fix upon certain times of the day, so that the return of the hour should remind us to say short prayers, or exercise our thoughts in a way equivalent to this, perhaps there are few persons in so high and habitual a state of piety, as not to find the benefit. If it take up no more than a minute or two, or even less time than that, it would serve the end I am proposing; it would be a recollection that we are in the divine presence, and contribute to our being in the fear of the Lord all the day long." Very different in its nature and its effects, would be this secret recollection of God—this frequent uplifting of the heart in prayer, from the ostentatious prayers of the Pharisees, who contrived to be at the corners of the streets, when their seasons of prayer came round; or of the ignorant Romanist, who will run through some form at the appointed moment, no matter where, or how; or of the superstitious Turk, who will fall down in the streets, if he be not near enough to his mosque, at the well known signal.

Nor, my brethren, must we regard as among the superstitious ceremonies those more solemn seasons of devotion, which, after the example of the devout Jews, at the command of God, the pious of

every age have observed. Here, also, let us apply the rule which we have been advocating. Our blessed Lord, while condemning the many traditions and commandments of men, which made void the law of God, yet, together with his apostles, punctually attended those great feasts which had been appointed to commemorate God's wonderful dispensation to Israel. So did our Reformers, while discarding all the anniversary celebrations of the canonized saints of Rome, and many other vain observances, yet faithfully retain those which bring before our minds and hearts the great leading facts and doctrine of the Gospel, in such a manner as to give them the deepest and most abiding impression; an impression, not weakened by the recollection that thus it ever had been with the people of God. Nor let us discard as unworthy of our use, because of its past and present abuse, that instrument of mortification to the body of sin, which the pious of every age have used, and found effectual by the grace of God—I mean fasting with prayer; which together being rightly used, cast out some demons, too strong to be dispossessed in any other way. What though it has been perverted to purposes of hypocrisy and superstition; what though it has been substituted in part for the very justifying righteousness of Christ; if it be according to God's will, these are only proofs how hateful it is to the great enemy who hath set himself too effectually to prevent it, as he has the holy sacraments, and every part of our blessed religion. Because it is now so falsely pretended to, and abused in the Roman Church; and even though, as commended by some in our own, it has been made to interfere in some measure with the alone merits of Christ; let us not think for a moment of relinquishing it, but receive it as coming from a higher source, and use it as we find it set forth in scripture, and faithfully explained in the homilies.

Let a due measure of abstinence at certain times from that food which we are so apt to use immoderately, be accompanied with long and deep, and thorough self-examination, going down into the depths of sin in the heart, finding out more and more of our abominations, until filled with more and more of horror at ourselves, we cry out in dismay, "wretched beings that we are! who shall deliver us from the body of this death?"; and only feel that we have gotten the blessing in proportion as we are able to come out of our wretched selves, and to cast our souls on the grace of the Redeemer. Any season of fasting and prayer which does not end in this, in deeper humility and more entire reliance on his blood, and lead to more self-denial in other things, and diligence in all good works, is not such a fast as is acceptable to God. *k*

k In nothing ought the ministers of God to be more careful, in observing this law of proportion, than in the exhibition of the doctrines and duties of religion, the faith that saves, and the works which are the fruits of it, and which are the means of its perfection; the Spirit which quickens, and the graces which proceed from it.

The Apostle enjoins it on Titus, to "attend to the things which be-

The rule applied to religious controversy.

I shall now draw this charge to a close, by applying the rule to the subject of religious controversy; than which, none has been fraught with more painful interest to the friends of true piety in every age of the Christian Church.

There are no passages in the latter portions of the New Testament so distressing, as those which refer to the unhappy disputes among the early followers of our Lord, shewing that even then it was necessary to take heed lest they should "so bite and devour one another; and be "consumed one of another;" and to avoid "foolish and unlearned questions, which do gender strifes." ¹ Thus, however, in spite of the inspired warnings, did it continue, and the bitter fruits of it have been reaped in every age. The Fathers are full of complaints of the dissensions in their several days. Of

come sound doctrine," and then tells him how to do this, by exhorting different persons to the duties and virtues belonging to their age and station; and again, how strongly does he urge him "to affirm *constantly* that they which have believed in God be careful to maintain good works!" A neglect of such right distribution of the word, must be attended with evil. It will not do to say with some, that the new nature given to the Christian will of its own accord, and of necessity, do all such good works, without this urging. It will not do them, but will neglect many of them, unless ministers, after the example of our Lord and his Apostles, urge them to abound therein. Religion has suffered much from the evil effects of this neglect on the part of its ministers. Our Lord and the Apostles set us an example of faithful warnings, even as to things which some ministers now think unworthy of their notice; or say, if the hearts of the people be rightly instructed in doctrines, they will need no warning, but will of themselves avoid the evil thereof. *They* did not think it beneath them to enjoin simplicity and economy in dress, such as becometh Christians, and to warn against revellings, banquetings, and such like things; and unless these are now properly discoursed of, in private and public, by the ministry, right views and practice will not prevail amongst the people. In relation to them, and all other things, the only rule is, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." In the scriptures we have instructive examples of the right exhibition of faith and works. Faith comes first, but we must see and add to it, "virtue, and knowledge," and the other kindred graces.

¹ The wretched effects of religious bigotry, and the cruel persecutions to which it has led, have often caused the infidel and scoffer to say, in the language of the poet, "*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum;*" but it should be remembered, that it was not religion, but its perversion—superstition—which was guilty. It has been truly said, "*Religio facit homines e feris; superstitio e hominibus feras.*" If it be still said that pious Christians and ministers have been engaged in such persecutions, it should be remembered in mitigation, that, from the connexion between the civil and religious establishments of those countries where such persecutions have prevailed, the sins, which were so severely punished, partook of disobedience towards the laws, and civil magistrates, and became rebellion, and therefore some severity was not so easily avoided.

one period, Erasmus says, "In those days it was a great point of cunning, to know how to be a Christian man." The good Hooker, in closing his work in defence of the English Church against numerous most idle cavils, and unfounded charges, quotes from Gregory Nazianzen, and adopts as his own, and suitable to his day, the following pathetic words; "My mind leadeth me to fly, and to convey myself into some corner out of sight, where I may scape from this cloudie tempeste of maliciousness, whereby all parts are entered into a deadly war amongst themselves, and that little remnant of love which was, is now consumed to nothing. The only godliness we glory in, is to find out somewhat whereby we may judge others to be ungodly. Each other's faults we observe, as matters of exprobration, and not of grief. *m* By these means, we are grown hateful in the eyes of the Heathen themselves; and (which woundeth us the more deeply) able we are not to deny, that we have deserved their hatred. With the better sort of our own, our credit is clean lost." Mr. Hooker then concludes with the hope, that the contentions in England were at that time at their highest pitch; and, as to the man who would in any way help to appease them, prays that "the blessings of the God of peace may be upon him, both in this world and in that which is to come, more than the stars in the firmament in number." His longing for peace reminds us of the words of the good Melancthon, who, amongst several reasons why he longed for Heaven, mentioned, as not the least, that "there he should be delivered from religious controversy." Our homilies, written by Cranmer, and Jewell, and others, who of necessity deeply engaged in controversy, and well knew its sad effects, have some excellent advice on this subject. In that against contention, it is said, "that among all kinds of contention, none is more hurtful than is contention in matters of religion." "O body mystical of Christ, where is that holy and happy unity, out of the which whosoever is, he is not in Christ!" "We cannot be joined to Christ, our head, if we be not glued with charity and concord one to another." "Let us so read the scriptures, that by reading thereof we be made the better livers, rather than the more contentious disputers."

m The religious press occupies a position of fearful responsibility in this country, far more than in any other; for religious papers abound more here than elsewhere. It was at an early period in their history, that some reflecting persons questioned whether more of good or evil would result from them. As that must depend on the manner in which they are conducted, let all pray that a large share of the spirit of truth, candor, and love may be poured out on those who conduct them, and those who contribute to them. It should be remembered into how many families they enter, and that they ought to enter, as far as possible, like ministers of Christ, saying, "Peace be to this house, and to all that dwell therein." Especially should it be borne in mind, that by very many of the Laity, they are reserved for Sunday reading, for the mornings or evenings of the Sabbath. I was once asked by a young Christian, concerning one of the religious papers in our country, whether it were right to read it on the Sabbath; I was sorry to be unable to answer in the affirmative.

And yet, evil as religious controversy is, and much as we may long to be entirely free from it, in the present state of things it cannot be altogether avoided, without a neglect of duty to the cause of truth. When we are commanded, as much as lieth in us, to live peaceably with all men, there is evidently implied the impossibility of living altogether, and at all times, in such peace; and the duty evidently is limited to the seeking for it, so far as a regard to truth and duty will allow, and others will permit. And, forasmuch as almost every man, in the words of the homily on Christian Love "maketh and formeth to himself charity after his own appetite," it is important that we should understand what that charity is, which "rejoiceth in the truth"—which is doubtless the same with that wisdom "which is from above, and is first pure, and then peaceable." Bishop Jewell says, "To have peace with man, we may not be at war with God." "The name of peace is a sweet and pleasant thing," saith Hilary: "but yet beware," he adds, "for peace is one thing, and bondage is another. For, if it should so be as they seek to have it, (speaking of the Romanists,) that Christ should be commanded to keep silence, that the truth of the Gospel should be betrayed, that horrible errors should be cloaked, that Christian men's eyes should be blinded, and that they should be suffered to conspire openly against God; this were not a peace, but a most ungodly covenant of servitude." "There is a peace (saith Nazianzen) that is unprofitable—there is a discord that is profitable." For we must conditionally desire peace; so far as is lawful before God; and so far as we may conveniently. For otherwise, Christ himself brought not peace into the world, but a sword." (See Jewell's Apology, page 155—6.)

Since there were, and ever have been, many Anti-Christis; since error in various forms is continually springing up in the Church of God, and ought to be opposed; it is for us to consider how this is to be done so as to be attended with the least evil and most good. It is not a grace of easy attainment. Even the best and most peaceable men, who hate, and would shun controversy, and engage in it with the most determined resolution to conduct it aright, have cause to mourn over some errors of temper or language, into which they have been betrayed; and sometimes those most innocent in the beginning of a dispute, become most guilty before the close, from the wrong manner of conducting it; and those who plead for truth, injure it by a too violent spirit. Perhaps these things are permitted by Providence, in order to deter us from too readily engaging in controversy, seeing we are so apt to dishonor ourselves, and the cause which we espouse. *n*

It would greatly help us to avoid the evils, and receive all the benefits of controversy, if we would carefully attend to the principle

n "Good things do lose the grace of their goodness, when in good sort they are not performed."—HOOKER.

"There will come a time when three words uttered with charity and meekness will receive a far more blessed reward, than three thousand volumes written with disdainful sharpness of wit."—IDEM.

for which we are pleading, and let our zeal be proportioned to the certainty and importance of the things discussed. While we are bound *earnestly* to contend for the faith—the great principles of religion essential to salvation—so held by the great body of Christians in every age—we should maintain all other things according to the place, which a dispassionate consideration of scripture, and observation upon their effects, seem to assign them. We have now the experience of eighteen centuries to aid us in our judgment of the effects of different views, not only of the great doctrines of religion, but of the lesser and more doubtful ones; and our reason is given us to be exercised thereon. If, with a sincere desire for truth, and in a spirit of brotherly kindness to all men, we endeavored to discuss these things according to their relative importance, then religious controversy would be not only less bitter and violent, but would oftener result in conviction and agreement.

In the treatment of delicate, doubtful, and difficult points, we think our Reformers have with great wisdom set an excellent example, in their manner of treating two subjects especially, about which there has been, and will be, much diversity of opinion; and the effect of their example has been most happy ever since in the Church, preserving it in a great measure from discord. I allude to the manner in which she has spoken of what are called the Divine decrees, and the constitution of the Church. Either by her silence as to some things, or her wise and cautious and comprehensive language as to others, she has satisfied almost all, and offended but few; and her ministers, though claiming, as she does not forbid, their right to go to a higher source for their private opinions on these subjects, yet, in their relations to each other as churchmen, feel bound not to require of each other, in order to fidelity to her, more than is plainly set forth. Wherefore, many persons though differing somewhat on these points, have lived together very happily in her communion.

At times indeed, there have been some disposed to bring these subjects into more public discussion, and greater prominence, and to speak censoriously of those who differ from them; but this has generally been discouraged, although with the acknowledgement that there was entire liberty of opinion in the same. *o*

o Puller, in his work on the Moderation of the Church of England, adduces many passages from Bishops, and the injunctions of the constituted authorities, disapproving of introducing into the pulpits such points as are so disputable. "The judicious Bishop Sanderson, (he says) in his directions for the peace of the Church, lays down this as first: "That particular Churches should be as tender as may be, in giving their definitions and determinations, especially when there may be admitted a latitude of dissenting without prejudice done, either to the substance of the Catholic faith, or to the tranquility of the Church, or to the salvation of the dissenter; in which respect (he says) the moderation of the Church of England is much to be commended and preferred; not only before the Roman Church, which with insufferable tyranny, bindeth all her children, under pain of

But whatever be the difference of sentiment as to the subjects which should be discussed, or the views to be taken of them, and conclusions drawn from them, surely there ought to be none as to the spirit in which they should be set forth. And indeed a proper spirit will be one of the best guides to us, in deciding the relative importance of things. If, in meekness and love we endeavor to instruct those that oppose themselves, we shall scarcely fall into the evil of condemning them too much for pardonable errors. The violent are generally wrong in their judgments and decisions. But even when there can be no doubt whatever, as to the certainty and greatness of the corruption in doctrine and practice, of those whom it is our duty to condemn, we should beware of any thing unbecoming in the manner, or exaggerated in the language which is used. "If by froward answering to a froward person, there were hope to remedy his frowardness, he should less offend that should so answer, doing the same, not of ire, or malice, but only on that intent,

damnation, to all her determinations, even in these points which are no way necessary to salvation; but also before sundry other reformed Churches, who have proceeded further than this Church hath done." Bishop Bramhall says, "If it were not for this disciplinarian humor which will admit of no latitude in religion but makes each nicety a fundamental, and every private opinion an article of faith; which prefers particular errors before general truths; I doubt not but all reformed Churches would easily be reconciled. Wherefore, in such points which may be held diversely of divers men, I would not take any man's liberty from him, and humbly beseech all men, that they would not take mine from me."

Bishop Andrews also, on the deep points of predestination and election, says, "I truly and ingenuously confess, I have followed the counsel of St. Austin. These mysteries which I cannot unfold, I admire them shut; and therefore for these sixteen years since I was made Priest, I neither publicly nor privately have disputed nor preached of them. And truly since it is a slippery place, and hath on either side its precipices; and since these places of St. Paul are always esteemed among those which are hard to be understood; and many of the clergy are neither fit to explain them, nor many of the people can be idoneous hearers, I would even persuade silence on both sides: and truly I judge it to be more expedient that our people be taught to seek salvation in the plain way of an holy and upright life, than in the hidden paths of the divine counsels; into which, a too curious inspection use to cause giddiness, in their heads, and mists before their eyes."

From the injunctions issued under different reigns as to preaching, he cites one which speaks of the "extravagance of sundry young divines, who took upon them in their popular sermons to handle the deep points of God's eternal counsels and decrees, and other fruitless controversies; serving rather to amuse, than profit the hearer; which is done for the most part, and with greatest confidence, by such persons as least understand them." He also quotes many other advices to the same effect, as to religious controversy, which have much wisdom, (See p. 124, and onwards.)

that he that is so froward or malicious may be reformed. But he that cannot mend another man's fault, or cannot amend it without his own fault, better it were that one should perish than two. Then if he cannot quiet him with gentle words, at least let him not follow him with wicked and uncharitable words." (Homily on Contention.) What is said in our homilies, on the subject of the proper mode of carrying on contention had doubtless a reference chiefly to the differences with the Church of Rome. Nor would we wish to forget them even now, in the disputes with that most corrupt Church in her vigorous efforts to regain what she had lost.

It is a most solemn duty resting on Protestants to expose fully, and in strong language, now as of old, the false doctrines of Popery; to adopt the most effectual means for acquainting an ignorant world with the truth on this subject, by the statement of facts in her past and present history, and by the faithful exhibition, from authentic documents, of her real principles and character; but still let the greatest care be taken not to color, or exaggerate in the least degree, whether we consider the sacred regard due to truth and charity, or the effect of such a course upon the cause itself. Let us have in view not merely the preservation of others from her corruption, but even, forlorn as it may seem, the hope of her own reformation. *p*

p As a specimen of the proper spirit which should regulate our exposures of the corruptions of the Roman Church, we would refer to the recent essays of our late presiding Bishop, and the work of the Bishop of Vermont addressed to the Romanists.

Bishop Ridley says, "that the truth neither needeth, nor will be maintained with lies. It is also a true common proverb, "that it is even sin to lie upon [against] the Devil, for though by thy lie, thou dost never so much speak against the Devil, yet in that thou liest, indeed thou workest the Devil's work; thou dost him service, and takest the Devil's part." (Ridley's Works, p. 10.) To make false views of religion, or those which we think so, appear as evil as possible, strong is the temptation not only to think ill of those holding them, but to represent their character in the worst light, as a justification of our strong condemnation. It is said that one of the persecutors of Archbishop Laud, (who, notwithstanding all his high views and arbitrary measures, both in Church and State, which contributed no little to the temporary downfall of both, was doubtless a sincere and pious man,) in reply to one who said he was a good man, declared "be he never so good, we must now make him ill for our own sakes!" Let all Christians remember this, when they are opposing what they believe to be error, and are tempted to misrepresent those who differ from them.

The charge of schismatic and heretic, (which among the Fathers, and Reformers also, were often used to denote the same thing,) is too freely made, even to the extent of cutting off the accused from the body of Christ's Church. We may feel bound to charge persons with holding false and heretical opinions, and with needlessly separating from a Church, so as to offend God and injure religion; but to declare them positively to be heretics, or schismatics, in the sense above mentioned, is to assume too much of the infallibility of Rome. In repel-

And if such be our duty as to the greatest corruptions of our blessed religion, then surely, even more so should it be as to those whose ancestors, together with our own, fought the battles of the Reformation, and who now, on many a field of Christendom, and of the yet unconverted world, must renew the combat. Archbishop Sancroft, whose Churchmanship, we may say high Churchmanship, none can question, drew up some advices for his clergy, at a time when Popery was seeking to regain her power in England, which are marked by a wisdom and piety worthy of admiration; and from which I select the following: "Lastly, they were charged to walk in wisdom towards those who were not of their communion, conferring with them in the spirit of meekness, and seeking by all good ways and means to win them over; more especially, with respect to their brethren, the Protestant Dissenters, "that, upon occasions offered, they visit them at their houses, and receive them kindly at their own, and treat them fairly whenever they meet them; persuading them, if it may be, to a full compliance with our Church; or at least that "whereunto we have all attained, we may all walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing." And in order hereunto, that they take all opportunities of assuring and convincing them, that the Bishops of this Church are really and sincerely irreconcilable enemies to the errors, superstitions, idolatries, and tyrannies, of the Church of Rome; and that the very unkind jealousies, which some have had of us to the contrary, were entirely groundless. And in the last place, that they warmly and most affectionately exhort them to form with us a daily fervent prayer to the God of peace, for the universal, blessed union of all reformed Churches, both at home, and abroad, against our common enemies; that all they, who do confess the holy name of our dear Lord, and do agree in the truth of his holy word, may also meet in one holy communion, and live in perfect unity, and godly love."—(Southey's *Book of the Church*, volume 2d, page 495.)

ling such a charge, Bishop Jewell says, "For where they call us heretics, it is a crime so heinous, that unless it may be seen, unless it may be felt, and in a manner may be holden with hands and fingers, it ought not lightly to be judged or believed, when it is laid to the charge of any Christian. For heresy is a forsaking of salvation—a renouncing of God's grace—a departing from the body and spirit of Christ." (Jewell's *Apology*, p. 24.)

Bishop Ridley says, "Our Saviour Christ, when they called him a Samaritan, a friend of publicans and sinners, a drunkard, etc., held his tongue and made no answer; but when they said he hath a devil, he said, I have no devil." And then he mentions a case of one who was charged with all manner of crimes, but said nothing, until they called him heretic, and then he said, "I am a sinner, but I am not an heretic." Being asked why he answered to that, rather than the other; he said, he learnt of Christ his master, to suffer lies, but not his doctrine to be touched; for heresy separates a man from God."

CONCLUSION.

In the application of the various remarks which have been made, and sentiments adduced, all more or less tending to the one point aimed at in this charge, let me now conclude with the expression of an earnest hope, and prayer, that God may give wisdom and grace to the Episcopal Church in America, to form an accurate estimate of all these things alluded to, and to act accordingly. On very many accounts our Church according to her numbers, occupies a most influential and responsible position in this country, by the acknowledgment of all. Not only does her own character and prosperity, but the honor and welfare of Christ's kingdom upon earth, depend in no slight degree, upon the part she shall act. The intelligence of her clergy, the wealth, and respectability, and high refinement of her laity, her origin and past history, her well established claim to be as nearly conformed as is practicable to the Churches founded by the Apostles; these and many other considerations, make a loud call upon her ministers and members, to see that the cause entrusted to them shall suffer no injury through any weaknesses, or false judgment, or extravagance on their part. *q* In order to their greatest ef-

q There is too common an impression, it is to be feared, in many minds, that the most effectual way of overcoming one error or evil, is by means of its opposite. Things in the natural world are referred to, as proofs and illustrations. It is said that a bent bow, or stick can only be straightened, by being violently drawn for a time in the opposite direction; and that the earth, and other bodies are only kept together, and in their respective orbits, by the two opposing forces, the centripetal and centrifugal, which are both violently rushing to opposite extremes, but in their conflict preserve an equilibrium. Now, although there be many things alike in the natural and moral worlds, it does not follow that all things are exactly so; and, at any rate, it does not follow that, in the promotion of man's highest happiness, and God's greatest glory on earth, God cannot dispense with the service of falsehood, in order to sustain truth. Although he does bring good out of evil, and make even the wrath of man to praise him, yet we should remember that he positively forbids us to do evil that good may come. His truth does not stand in need of our falsehood for its support, although he will not allow our falsehood to destroy his truth. God forbids all lukewarmness, and says it is a good thing, to be zealously affected; but only in a good thing. And we should always remember, that if God can, and does bring good out of our evil, even though he has forbidden it, how much more good would he bring out of our good, which he hath commanded. Nor should we forget, that, although some good may be brought out of our evil, still how much evil comes of it also, to the dishonor of ourselves and religion: Let us therefore always try to get the truth itself, and oppose that, and nothing else, to error and falsehood.

In condemnation of the principle, that "evils must be cured by their

fectiveness, it becomes them to be in unity among themselves, and to agree well as to the true principles of the Church which they would recommend to others. In order to this, they should candidly and carefully study the true meaning and design of the standards of the Church as may be collected from those standards themselves and the other writings of their authors.

He should be regarded as the truest Churchmen, who, so far as doctrine is concerned, in due subordination to the supremacy of scripture, is most conformed in his thoughts and views, to those standards, neither going beyond, or falling short of them. To require of any to believe more than those; and question his attachment to the Church because he does not, is as false Churchmanship, as to believe less, and seek to induce others to believe less also. To stretch the doctrine of the Church beyond her evident design, as evinced in the language she has used, and in her past history, is to sink her in the esteem of many of her own members, and to deter others from approaching her communion and ministry. The adoption, and the zealous and united enforcement of those things in which we all agree, is much more likely to be effective, than the positive assertion of doubtful and offensive things by some, and their denial by others. A house thus divided, although it may not fall, cannot be so inviting an abode to those who would gladly seek a peaceful shelter, from scenes of discord and confusion.

In regard to the course to be pursued towards our fellow Christians of other denominations, great is our need of heavenly wisdom and grace. Situated as our Church is in this country, seeking to enlarge her borders with the rapidly increasing population, it must be, that conflicts of interest and opinion will take place with those who differ from us. Even those, who, from natural disposition as well as religious principle, are most disposed, as much as in them lieth, to live peaceably with all men, will find it at times impossible to avoid offence, without surrendering what they feel bound to maintain.

Surely, however, our bishops and other ministers ought to study most anxiously how to unite the two commanded duties at the solemn seasons of consecration and ordination, "to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word," and yet "as much as in them lieth to maintain quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people."—It must be evident also, that, in proportion as we adopt, and urge with vehemence, views exclusive and forbidding, we increase the hostility alluded to; and if the same views be

contraries," Hooker says, "we are contrarywise of opinion, that he who will perfectly recover a sick, and restore a diseased body unto health, must not endeavor so much to bring it to a state of simple contrariety, as of fit proportion in contrariety unto those evils which are to be cured. He that will take away extreme heat, by setting the body in extremity of cold, shall undoubtedly remove the disease, but together with it the diseased too."

doubtful, as well as offensive, our position becomes hazardous, and the opposition injurious. Even the urging unseasonably, too vehemently, and in a wrong spirit, subjects not to be neglected, may be hurtful to the cause which we would advance. I speak thus, not to advocate a cowardly silence, or that kind of latitude, which, as Bishop Taylor says, "has something of craft, but very little of ingenuousness; which can only serve the ends of peace, and external charity, or a fantastic concord; but not the ends of truth, and holiness, and christian simplicity;" but only to urge the duty of a most faithful examination of the ground which is assumed, to see if it be that which we can certainly maintain by an appeal to Heaven, and Heaven's truth; for, as in the conflicts between the armies of earth, a right position is most important to success, and still more, as a good cause is the source of true courage, and leads to perseverance, and to final victory; since

"Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just;"

so it is most important, that, in those unhappy disputes which we have with our Christian brethren, we should be girt about with truth, as well as have on the breastplate of righteousness. Otherwise we cannot expect the blessing of Heaven. *r*

In conducting this unwilling contest, it should also be remembered, that there is a difference between it, and the wars of nations. In the latter, no matter who be the aggressor, if a country be assailed, all must be equally engaged, or fall by the sword, or be driven from their homes, so that necessity is laid upon them to take up arms and contend, though it be unto death. In the contest for religious principles, none are bound to go beyond their own convictions of truth, and so each one may regulate his contest according to his belief that true religion is assailed. Nor should any, who have gone beyond the bounds which others conscientiously believe to be established by God and his Church, complain of being deserted by those who would fain have contended with them, side by side, for principles, and usages, of whose high origin they entertain no doubt.

But if these unhappy differences cannot be settled, and all the Christians in our land be persuaded to more agreement and unity, then, at least, may God give such grace to all, that the disputes may be so conducted as to reflect least dishonor on the holy cause, and to shew that, though differing about things considered important, they yet acknowledge them to be not the most important.

It is to me no slight argument in favor of the views which I have presented, that they are such as I believe have been generally held

r "Whatsoever is spoken of God, or of things appertaining to God, otherwise than as the truth is, though it seem an honor, it is an injury. And as incredible praises given unto men, do sometimes abate and impair the credit of their deserved commendation; so likewise we must take great heed, lest in attributing to scripture more than it can have, the incredibility of that, do cause even those things which it has most abundantly, to be less reverently esteemed."

(HOOKER, 2d Book.)

by the Church in this country. The voice of that Church has spoken to us triennially, since its first establishment, in the pastoral letters of the House of Bishops, which, being first drawn up with care by the presiding Bishop, then revised by the others, and afterwards approved by the Clergy and Laity in General Convention, goes forth through all the Churches, as the expression of the sentiment of her chief council, on subjects of deepest importance to the welfare of Zion. The venerable names of White and Griswold, will not be less venerable from the fact, that they have been the authors of all the pastoral letters which have issued from the Bishops of the Church in this country; and may the mild, moderate, truly Catholic, judicious and holy counsels contained therein, be ever remembered and followed by us; then "shall discretion preserve us, and understanding shall keep us;" and, like themselves, we shall find favor both with God and man. s

To you my dear brethren and friends of the Clergy and Laity in Vir-

s The mild and dignified conduct of the Church of England, with a few lamentable exceptions at an early period, and under peculiar circumstances, chiefly to be ascribed to her connection with the State, has ever been admired. It was said in praise of one of the ancients, "that his moderation gave him great security in troublesome times, procured him friends, kept him considerate and circumspect in all he did; that he never overshot himself with folly, passion, and precipitancy, in words and actions," So has it been said of the wise moderation of the English Church. "She hath been judged by the most learned and equal judges of things, so well pitched in her principles, and of so rare a temper in her constitution, that she is rightly resolved to be the best, and most proper, for arbitrating and reconciling the differences of Christendom." Who does not rejoice in hope of great good from the joint efforts of the Church of England and Prussia, in establishing a Bishopric at Jerusalem, where, without any sacrifice of real principle, the work of renovating the decayed churches of the East, and converting the Jews, may be attempted under the most favorable auspices? There were some violent churchmen in England, who, with the Roman Catholics and a portion of the dissenters, opposed the measure, though from different motives; but the wise counsels of the good Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London prevailed. These men and the great body of the Bishops and Clergy, rejoiced in the union; nor could they see as some did, a profanation in the ordinance of baptism, or a giving up the distinctive principles of the Church, in the act of sponsorship for the young heir to the English throne, on the part of the King of Prussia, though himself a Lutheran.

The Church of America, hath hitherto, under the guidance of old and venerable heads, most of them now sunk into their graves, followed in the path of our Anglican forefathers; and may the great Head of the Church vouchsafe the abundance of his grace to those on whom her chief government now rests, that she may in all time to come be so distinguished for her wise moderation, and undoubted orthodoxy, and holy living, as to deserve and receive the love and respect of all men.

ginia, let me now say, that although I have, as was unavoidable, been speaking of general principles, yet have I, as one on whose mind a care for you all presseth with no little force, had you ever especially in view. I do feel a holy jealousy in your behalf, desiring and praying that you may judge and act rightly in all things, for your own sake, and for the sake of that Church which you love, and for the whole cause of Christ. I do not declare unto you my sentiments, as those which you are bound to receive, but offer them for your prayerful consideration; that, if they be agreeable to God's word, and the standards of our Church, you may embrace and practise them. Although I know something of the trials and perplexities which beset you, in performing the duties which you owe to that branch of the Church of God committed to your trust, especially in endeavoring to live peaceably with all; yet, as each heart of man knoweth its own bitterness, so the peculiar trials of each one of you is only known to himself; and to the God of peace and love, must you look up for wisdom to guide you aright. I am sure, however, that I cannot err, in entreating you to reflect often upon the principles which, in the preceding pages, I have endeavored to enforce. In the books you read, in your thoughts and affections, in your conversation and arguments, in the appropriation of your time, in your judgments of others, and in all other things, let it be your endeavor to have due regard to the relative importance of the different subjects, watching their operation on your hearts, and esteeming those most highly, which make you most humble, most loving, and most faithful in all things. My prayer is, that not one of you may prove to be either "a spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," on that glorious Church which Christ wishes to present unto himself, as a lovely bride, adorned with the perfect beauty of holiness. May you all be either pillars, or polished corners, or, at least, lively stones, in that spiritual temple, which is one day to be taken up into Heaven, and there to be glorified forever and ever.—Amen.

APPENDIX.

I.

In illustration of the error opposed in the preceding charge, I would refer to two works recently read; the one on baptism, the other on the Lord's supper.

That on baptism is a volume of eight hundred pages by the Rev. Mr. Budd, a pious minister of the Church of England, and containing much that is most excellent. He evidently discovers a great jealousy of the other sacrament, (the Lord's supper) thinking that it is unduly valued to the injury of baptism. Although he condemns in the strongest terms the views of baptismal regeneration as held by the Oxford writers, yet is baptismal regeneration as he thinks it is set forth in the prayer book, and baptismal education, every thing in his system. Being strongly Calvinistic in his views, he regards the 17th article as without doubt fully with him, and containing the whole Gospel in few words. His praises and admiration of it as thus understood are unbounded. Moreover he considers it as the key to open the true meaning of the baptismal office, which he thinks contains the same doctrine, as well as the whole Liturgy. Mr. Budd is a most zealous advocate for extempore preaching, exhortation, and exposition of scripture, and has many excellent arguments in their behalf, while he shows no quarter to any written discourses. Here again the fixed idea is upon him, for he considers not only that the explaining the baptismal service, and the catechism to children is the best mode of teaching extemporaneous eloquence to ministers, but that the best mode of correcting the whine and monotony of voice in children, and preparing them for extempore preaching is the use of the baptismal service and catechism. It would be amusing to see into what excess this pious writer is carried by his undue partiality for one of God's appointments, were it not painful to think how a good cause is injured by it. Whoever has the work will find the above no extravagant exhibition of it.

The other work alluded to, is that of Dr. Vicesimus Knox on the Lord's supper. This is an abridgement of a much larger treatise. Contrary to Mr. Budd, he thinks the Eucharist "a more important sacrament than baptism, and much more effectual than instruction by hearing, because they are merely initiatory, but the Eucharist is perfective." "If any part of religious service is allowed to be effectual in procuring grace and pardon and salvation, the Eucharist is much more." "All modes of instruction, such as preaching and reading; all modes of devotion, except the idolatrous, certainly tend to procure grace, and that portion of grace so procured, may by the grace of God be sufficient for us; but these are all preparatory to the great opportunity afforded in the Eucharist, for changing our hearts entirely, for our participation of the divine nature." Section 7th. He speaks in section 9th of "Sacramental Communion as being without doubt one of the most certain means of accomplishing this union with the Deity, because it is the means instituted by our Saviour." But are not all other means instituted also? Divines differ in opinion as to the application of those passages in the 6th chapter of St. John, which speak of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ, and partaking of the bread of life, some thinking that there was no

special reference to the last supper, although of course including that, as well as all other means of communion with Christ. Dr. Knox affirms that Christ especially spoke of that by anticipation, and not only so, but maintains that the Lord's prayer was in like manner given by anticipation for use in the Lord's supper. He is confident that the expression, "give us our daily bread," has no reference whatever to temporal sustenance, but particularly to the food of Christ's body in the Lord's supper, which was daily administered in the primitive Church; and the prayer for forgiveness of sins following next to that for daily bread, had reference to that pardon of sin, which is especially given in the Lord's supper. "I have no doubt (he says) our Saviour appointed this prayer with a particular view to the celebration of the Eucharist, which he soon after instituted; and christians guided by tradition from the Apostles, in the earliest times of Christianity, applied the Lord's prayer almost exclusively to the sacraments of the Lord's supper, which was then received every day." The faithful alone, he tells us, were permitted to say this prayer, which was called the "prayer of the faithful," because "they only could with propriety pray in the fourth clause for the bread of life" Section 12.

As to the petition for forgiveness of sins he says, "I have no hesitation in saying that this clause must have a particular reference to remission of sins as annexed to the worthy reception of the Eucharistical elements." Section 12.

If it be true, that this prayer is only for the faithful, and that the petition for daily bread and pardon of sin, were designed by our Lord, to be specially for his body and blood, and remission of sin, as promised in the sacrament, then has our Church done wrong in appointing it to be used in every office of the prayer book, and even in every morning and evening of family prayer by all present. Or else, it must be admitted that she thinks we may become partakers of our Lord, and have this bread of life at some other times than at the Lord's table. It is due to Mr. Knox to state, that he admits this. "This spiritual food there is no doubt, is every day given to them who ask it with faith and true penitence." "But it is probable that larger portions of grace are bestowed, in a rite of his own institution, when worthily performed, than by prayer alone."

This is a concession which some of those who belong to a school in which he may be considered a leader, would scarce be willing to make. In this, as in many other cases, the disciples soon go beyond their masters; and were Knox now alive, he might wonder to see what advances have been made in a doctrine which he no doubt very piously set forth. In another sentiment also he would find himself utterly condemned by many of our day. I allude to his opinion of the comprehensiveness of the Church, which I will place in connexion with those of some others.

II.

The sentiments of Mr. Knox and others as to membership with the Christian Church.

"According to the plain deductions from scripture, mankind are divided into two distinct tribes, those who belong to the kingdom of

Christ, and those who belong to the world. The kingdom of Christ is the Catholic Church; but here it must be observed, that the Church comprehends all true believers in Christ, in every part of Christendom, laity, as well as clergy, however distinguished by different names, or subdivided into national, or other less numerous sects or societies. It is the Catholic Church that is meant, when it is contradistinguished from the world, it is the grand society which is united to Jesus Christ, as the limbs to the head of the body." Section 24.

Bishop Jeremy Taylor's opinion.

"For though it be uncertain when a man is a member of the Church, whether he be a member to Christ or no; because in the Church's nets are fishes good and bad; yet we may be sure, that if we be members of Christ, we are of a Church to all purposes of spiritual religion and salvation. And in order to this, give me leave to speak this great truth. He then states that whoever is baptised, improves his religious opportunities, partakes of our Lord's supper, as it may be had, worships God in public and private, and exhibits an holy life." "That man does as certainly belong to God, and is his son, as surely as he is his creature." EPISTLE DEDICATORY TO HIS HOLY LIVING.

Hooker's opinion.

"Whereupon because the only object which separateth ours from other religions, is Jesus Christ, in whom none but the Church doth believe, and whom none but the Church doth worship, we find that the Apostles do every where distinguish hereby, the Church from infidels and Jews; accounting them that call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to be his Church. If we go lower, we shall but add, unto this, certain casual and variable accidents, which are not properly of the being; but which make only for the happier and better being of the Church of God, either in deed, or in man's opinions and conceits. This is the error of all Popish definitions that hitherto have been brought. They define not the Church by what the Church essentially is, but by that wherein they imagine their own more perfect than the rest are. Touching parts of eminency and perfection, parts likewise of imperfection and defect, in the Church of God they are infinite; their degrees and differences, no way possible to be drawn unto any certain account. There is not the least contention and variance, but it blemisheth somewhat the unity that ought to be in the Church of Christ, which notwithstanding may have not only without offence, or breach of concord, her manifold varieties in rites and ceremonies of religion, but also her strifes and contentions many times, and that about matters of no small importance, yea, her schisms and factions, and such other evils, whereunto the body of the Church is subject, sound and sick, both remaining of the same body, as long as both parts retain, by outward profession, that vital substance of truth, which maketh Christian religion to differ from theirs, which acknowledge not our Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Saviour of mankind give no credit to his glorious gospel, and have his sacraments, the seals of eternal life in derision." ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY, 5th book.

The opinion of Dean Sherlock.

"Schism and separation is a breach of the external and visible communion of the Church, not of the essential unity of it. The Church is one Church still, whatever breaches and schisms there are in its external communion; for the union of the Catholic Church consists of the whole to Christ, which makes them one body in him; not in the external communion of the several parts of it to each other. And therefore it is not a separation from one another, but only a separation from Christ, which is a separation from the Catholic Church. There may be one Lord—one faith—one baptism, to those who are not in external communion one with another. There may be therefore a spiritual relationship, when through infirmity of the flesh, that relationship is not recognized, and does not issue in communion; just as men may be members of one family, who do not live together in friendly communion, as of one family."

III.

The Bishop of London's opinion as to the claims of ministerial power.

Having expressed a sentiment on the subject of the ministry in the foregoing charge, I would subjoin the following from the charge of a bishop, whose high and responsible position and whose energy and decision of character unite in preserving him from the least surrender of any lawful and scriptural authority. "If it be an error leading to, and partaking of the nature of schism, to deny or undervalue that authority, it is on the other hand injurious to the cause of truth and piety, to exaggerate it, and stretch its prerogative beyond that which has the sure warrant of the word of God. Those persons who are driven by the overstrained pretensions of the clergy to question, are almost sure to deny them their just rights." "As to our priesthood, let us beware of arrogating to ourselves the character of mediators between God and man, in any sense which implies, that we can stand between them and their judge, except with reference to that mysterious efficacy which belongs to the christian intercession, by whomsoever offered, if offered in faith." As to the authority of the Romish priests he says, "for a spiritual authority not so limited (that is, by laws) in the hands of fallible and imperfect men, would be perverted as in the example of Rome, to the ends of an intolerable tyranny over the secret thoughts and consciences, as well as the outward acts and observances of those who should be subject to it."—BISHOP OF LONDON'S CHARGE.

IV.

The wise moderation of the Reformers.

"But to me it does appear that without attributing to them an infallibility which they expressly disclaim, we may justly give our Reformers credit for such sound views, and such resolute adherence to evangelical truth, combined with such moderation and discretion, as were, considering the difficult circumstances they were placed in, truly wonderful; and such as are in all times, and not least in the present, well worthy of imitation. It was their "wisdom to keep

the mean (as it is expressed in the preface to the book of Common Prayer) between the two extremes, of too much stiffness in refusing, and too much easiness in admitting, any variation." It was their wisdom also to "keep the mean, between the claims, never conflicting, except when misunderstood—of scripture, and of a church. It was their wisdom to keep the mean between a slavish bondage to ancient precedents on the one hand, and a wanton and arrogant disregard of them on the other. It was their wisdom, their pious and christian wisdom, to keep the mean between rash and uncharitable judgment of other churches, and equally rash carelessness, or fondness for innovation, in the regulations of their own. They conformed as closely, as in their judgment circumstances would warrant, to the examples of the earliest churches without, for a moment abandoning the rightful claims of their own, and without arrogantly pronouncing censure on those whose circumstances had led them to depart further from those ancient precedents. Their faith they drew from the scriptures; their hope they based on the scriptures; their charity they learned from the scriptures."

The foregoing extract is taken from a recent work of Archbishop Whately on the Kingdom of Christ, which has been republished and widely circulated in our country. If the author of this note may be allowed an opinion, the work has more of merit than some have been disposed to allow, and more of error than others are willing to admit. One error we think it has in common with those whose views it is opposing. Some of the Tractarians maintained that the scriptures were comparatively silent on the subject of the ministry of the Church and of some other things belonging to the outward arrangement thereof, and that our Lord and the apostles purposely designed this, that such honor and duty might be assigned to tradition—the unwritten word. One of them affirms that our Lord purposely omitted to fill up the vacancy in the apostleship occasioned by the treason and death of Judas, during the interval between his resurrection and ascension, leaving that task to the eleven, thus to show how he had given them and their successors all power to perpetuate his kingdom. So also is it positively affirmed that the Holy Ghost either omitted altogether, or merely alluded to, some things, which were more fully committed to oral tradition. Archbishop Whately also affirms, though for a very different object, that but little is said in scripture as to the form of Church government, that there is a studious omission of any thing like a regular creed, or confession, or liturgy, or catechism, or baptismal or communion service, all of which he doubts not were used in the time of the apostles and by them. He expresses his undoubted conviction that the Holy Ghost purposely withheld the sacred writers from committing any of these things to the canonical scriptures, lest it should be supposed that they were intended for perpetual use, and no variation allowed, whereas such forms and ceremonies ought to be subject to some modification according to times and circumstances. But is it so certain, in the first place, that in the infancy of the Church and in the times of full inspiration there were all these full confessions, catechisms, liturgies, offices, etc? If they were not contained in

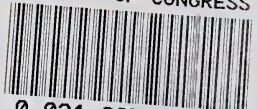
scripture would they not have found their way by tradition, in other books, etc. At any rate is any one justified in doing as the archbishop and the Oxford writers have done, viz. entering into the mind of our Lord and the Holy Ghost and undertaking positively to say what reasons induced them to cause certain omissions in the sacred record? "Is not this being wise above which is written?" If one person, or one party, be allowed thus to speculate on the secret unrevealed design of God, and build a system upon it, why not others? Is not this the error against which good Archbishop Leighton warns "being too confident in doubtful things?"

There is another position assumed by the archbishop the very opposite extreme to that of his opponents. While he expresses his firm conviction, that the Episcopal Church in its main features is conformed to that established by the apostles, and that it was most proper to have respect to that pattern, yet does he seem with too much latitudinarianism to allow, not merely that strong necessity may excuse a deviation, but that expediency might be the rule to decide upon the adoption or rejection of some of those features in the organization of the Church which have come down from apostolic times and which are justly held sacred by us. It is true that he seeks to guard the exercise of this right of change by many warnings against its abuse, but after all, the tendency of this part of the work is too favorable to those loose views which are adopted and acted on by many in our day to the injury of good order in the Church of God. We have been informed that this defect is acknowledged, and condemned by some not of our own communion, and whose opinion deserves to be respected.

As some form of Church government must be adopted by us, if the apostles established any in the various churches they planted, and we can ascertain with tolerable accuracy from scripture and early history what it was, we ought certainly to embrace it, and since human nature is the same in every age, why should it ever be changed? If under the Jewish dispensation and under apostolic discipline, divers orders of ministers were good for the government of the Church of God, and if the same has been continued down to us, how can any believing this to be so, for a moment consent to the thought of a change, on any other ground than that of strong necessity and with the acknowledged duty of a return to it when that necessity is removed. As to the general character of the work of Archbishop Whately, the author felt strengthened in the views he had taken of it by the opinion of our late presiding Bishop, expressed to him in the last interview he was privileged to have with that wise and holy man. He may make the same remark as to the principles advocated throughout the foregoing charge. Bishop Griswold deeply regretted a disposition to excess which he thought was manifested in some of our young ministers especially, in regard to things more doubtful and less important. Had his valuable life been spared to another General Convention, he thought of selecting as the subject of a Pastoral Letter, the nature and use of the sacraments concerning which he expressed a fear that some wrong views were entertained.



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